



Sankalpa of a Sannyasi



In humility we
offer this to
Swamí Sivananda Saraswatí,
who
inspired and guided
Swamí Satyananda Saraswatí.



Sankalpa
of a
Sannyasi



Peace, Plenty & Prosperity

Rajasooya Yajna 1995 - 2007, Rikhiapeeth





In 1988 Swami Satyananda Saraswati adopted kshetra sannyasa and embarked on a pilgrimage of the siddha teerthas of India.

The question in his mind was: “What next?”
At Trayambakeshwar, on September 8, 1989, he received the command from Lord Mrityunjaya, “Go to my chitabhoomi.”

Following the mandate, Sri Swamiji took up residence in Rikhia, Jharkhand where he immersed himself in the highest vedic sadhanas prescribed for paramahansa sannyasins.

During this time he had many divine revelations which manifested in the form of the grand and historic Rajasooya Yajna held from 1995 to 2007.

The sankalpa of the Rajasooya Yajna was “Peace, plenty and prosperity for all.” Thousands of people from all over the world were touched by this life-uplifting, transformative celebration in which divine grace was showered in abundance.

This is the story of this grand event.



Throughout human history the notable Rajasooya Yajna was conducted by great and eminent people of those times, whose accomplishments are well documented. The following are some of the important Rajasooya Yajnas held.

Lord Chandrama was the first to perform Rajasooya Yajna in antiquity. The three lokas were given as prasad.

The essential part of Rajasooya Yajna is the Aindri (Indra’s) abhisheka. The Aitareya Brahmana mentions the following kings have performed this abhisheka, after completing the Rajasooya Yajna. Janmejaya Parikshita, Saryata Manava, Satanika Shatrajita, Ambashthya, Yudhamshrausti Augrasainya, Vishwakarma Bhauvana, Sudas Pajavana, Marutta Avikshita, Anga Vairochana, Bharata Dauhshyanti.

King Ugrasena, Sri Krishna’s maternal grandfather, performed the yajna with Sri Krishna’s help.

Emperor Yudhishtira, in Dwapara Yuga, in the presence of Sri Krishna at Indraprastha.

King Kharvela of Kalinga, 185 BC.

King Pushyamitra Sunga, founder of Sunga dynasty, Mauryan empire, 185 BC. Revived Hinduism.

King Shatakarni I and his queen Naganika, part of the Satavahana lineage, Andhra Pradesh, South India 50 to 100 AD.

King Pravarasena I of the Vakataka dynasty, a Traikutaka ruler from Konkan, 457 AD.

King Harshavardhan of Kannauj and Thaneswar, 606 to 647 AD. He ruled over an empire spreading from Narmada to the Himalayas and from Ganjam to Gujarat.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati at Rikhiapeeth, Jharkhand, from 1995-2007 AD.

अनेक हृदयों को मुझे सजाने दो
और हजारों में मुझे नव—स्फूर्ण
तथा उच्च मूल्यों की मौन ध्वनि भरने दो।
मुझे एक बालक की तरह सरल जीवन जीने दो,
जिससे नंगे पैरों ही मैं हँसते तथा
रोते हुए लोगों की भीड़ के भीतर दौड़—दौड़ कर
उन्हें कल्पना के सुन्दर फूल बाँट सकूँ
और आश्चर्य कर सकूँ कि प्रभु अपनी
सम्पदा बेमूल्य ही बाँटते रहते हैं।

Let me decorate many hearts
And paint a thousand faces
with colours of inspiration,
And soft, silent sounds of value.
Let me be like a child,
Run barefoot through the forest
Of laughing and crying people,
Giving flowers of imagination and wonder
That God gives free.

Swami Satchanand

12 September 1943



Namo Narayana,

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah,

Sarve santu niramaya,

Sarve bhadrani pashyantu,

Maa kashchit dukha bhagbhavet.

May God make them prosperous,

May God make them free from disease,

May God remove all the sickness and ills of their family,

And let them enjoy bliss, peace, happiness and health.

This is my sankalpa. Until we
receive the grace of the Divine Mother,
our sorrows will not be removed.

Namo Narayana.





Chandī Yajna

Yajnas herald the awakening of human consciousness and represent that moment in history when man discovered fire and crossed the threshold from the instinctive animal nature to higher planes of consciousness. Fire is one of the five elements of creation and its existence is eternal. The discovery of fire and its potential was a giant leap from animal to human awareness.

Through the purifying influence of Agni and the sound vibration of mantras, the effect of yajna is felt on two levels: internal and external. The external yajna helps to promote ecological balance and purity, and the internal indicates the ignition of man's consciousness as he awakens to realize his being. The ultimate aim of yajna is self-realization. Exposure to yajna is a practical way to reach this goal.

Sat Chandi Mahayajna is dedicated to the Divine Mother, the universal creatrix. It is conducted to invoke the blessings and auspiciousness of Devi for the purpose of bringing prosperity, peace and happiness into people's lives. Sat Chandi Mahayajna symbolizes the process of generation, distribution and consumption, the three aspects of creation. Prasad is first offered to Devi and then distributed and consumed by people from all religions, castes and creeds. Sat Chandi Mahayajna is the medium of the Rajasooya Yajna, which exemplifies perfection in the art of giving, extending from the material to the spiritual.

चण्डी यज्ञ

यज्ञ मनुष्य चेतना की जागृति का उद्घोषक है। आदि मानव ने जब आग के बारे में जाना, तब उसने अपनी पाशविक वृत्तियों की दहलीज़ को लांघकर उच्चतर चेतना को प्राप्त किया। इतिहास के उस क्षण को हम यज्ञ के द्वारा श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करते हैं। आदि काल से सृष्टि की रचना में अग्नि का अस्तित्व है। अग्नि से ही मनुष्य का जीवन पथ आलोकित हुआ। आग की अद्भुत खोज और असीम क्षमता से चेतना का उत्थान सम्भव हुआ।

अग्नि के शुद्ध प्रभाव और मंत्रों के स्पन्दनों से यज्ञ का सम्पादन दो स्तरों पर होता है आन्तरिक और बाह्य। बाह्य स्तर पर वातावरण का संतुलन एवं शुद्धिकरण और आन्तरिक स्तर पर मनुष्य चेतना को प्रज्वलित कर आत्मज्ञान की प्राप्ति। यज्ञ का असली प्रयोजन आत्म-साक्षात्कार ही है। रिखियापीठ इस बात का साक्षी है, जहाँ स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती ने इस परम लक्ष्य तक पहुँचने का व्यावहारिक मार्ग दिखाया है।

शतचण्डी महायज्ञ जगत्-जननी माँ की आराधना है। इसका आयोजन देवी माँ का अनुग्रह प्राप्त कर लोगों के जीवन में सुख, शान्ति और समृद्धि लाने के उद्देश्य से किया जा रहा है। शतचण्डी महायज्ञ सृष्टि का प्रतिरूप है। उत्पादन, वितरण एवं उपभोग के तीन नियमों का इस यज्ञ में प्रत्यक्ष उदाहरण देखा जा सकता है। यज्ञ में प्रसाद सर्वप्रथम देवी माँ को निवेदित किया जाता है, फिर विभिन्न देशों से आए अनेक जाति और धर्म के लोगों में इसका वितरण और उपभोग होता है। शतचण्डी महायज्ञ राजसूय यज्ञ का माध्यम है और इस अवसर पर भेंट स्थूल वस्तु भी हो सकती है और सूक्ष्म आध्यात्मिक शक्ति भी।

1995



Guru and Disciple

My guru, Swami Sivananda, was born in Pattamadai, (Tamil Nadu). He was educated in Madras, and after completing his medical course he went to Malaysia. While serving there, he was deeply moved by the plight of suffering humanity. There was acute poverty in those days. After serving in Malaysia for a number of years, Swami Sivananda renounced his medical practice, returned to India and took sannyasa. He lived in Rishikesh at Swargashram on the bank of the Ganga opposite to where he established the Divine Life Society, and did sadhana there. I first met him in 1943.

I had been searching for a guru, although I did not really know what a guru was or what to expect from him. However, the moment I saw Swami Sivananda, my search for a guru came to an end. The person at the sight of whom the desire for love ends and *shraddha*, faith, finds its fulfilment is your guru. I didn't say to him, "You are my guru." He didn't say to me, "You are my disciple." When I asked him for sannyasa, he said that I should stay in the ashram and work hard physically, mentally and spiritually, and thereby I would find my own path automatically.

Our temperaments were diametrically opposed. I was like a ferocious Alsatian dog whereas my guru was very calm and serene like the humble holy cow, and I placed all my trust in him. He invariably said that everyone must learn to stand on their own two feet. I believed him because he told me that I should never think of living in the ashram permanently.

He used to say to me, "You have come here to live, but this ashram will prove too small for you. You won't be able to develop here. Therefore, take yoga and spread it throughout the world so that it becomes a universal science, acknowledged and accepted by all." Yoga had never been my subject. I only read Sanskrit texts on Advaita Vedanta, the Upanishads. I was a man of intellect and reason. When I told him that I knew no yoga, he replied that I would pick it up, and so it happened. I learned yoga very fast and carried his teachings far and wide across the continents.

I had only one goal, which was to restore yoga to its original status and glory. This was my guru's order, and through me this mission was fulfilled and yoga was universally accepted. If it is the wish of the guru, then his grace also comes down upon you. There is simply no scope for doubt in this regard. My guru commanded me to establish yoga all over the world, and it happened like that. The words of the





guru fructify through the disciple if his heart and lifestyle are simple and innocent.

Swami Sivananda gave me just one piece of advice, which was to have unshakeable faith in God. He told me not to be ruffled by hope and dejection, not to worry about my talents or the powers I would obtain later. I followed his words with full faith. Everyone is born with a predetermined destiny, we are all pre-programmed, and our journey through life follows that program.

The relationship between my guru and myself has been one of spiritual communion. It is a spiritual connection, not a physical connection. Even though he is no longer in the body, the bond formed when I first met him continues to this day. It is so strong that when he departed from his physical body I knew that he had gone.

Swami Sivananda always guided me and put me on the right track. He had endurance like a mountain and his forgiveness can only be compared to that of Mother Earth. He always told me never to hurt another's feelings, and he practised this throughout his life. I have met many sadhus, mahatmas and saints, but the person who has had the greatest influence on my life was Swami Sivananda. He convinced me, not because he was my guru, but because he was a man who lived in accordance with the laws of divinity.



God's Servant

Many years ago during a Kumbha Mela, a man suffering with leprosy was brought to the Rishikesh ashram in a gunny bag. Swami Sivananda called me and said, "Put him in a room and clean his body with the necessary antiseptics." Swamiji was a doctor and he knew what to do. I also had a little knowledge about such matters, so I carried out the duty I had been given. That man was obnoxious; his smell, attitude, behaviour, his entire being, was difficult to accept.

The next morning, when I gave Swamiji a report, he asked me how the man was. I said, "Swamiji, that man's disease is so difficult to handle." He replied, "You want to find God without any effort. You want to realize God without a change of heart, mind, philosophy and concept, without destroying your personal nest. You have a personality, character, views, habits, likes and dislikes. Destroy them first and change your heart." If it had been a beautiful young lady or even a beautiful or rich man, I would have served them without complaining. Such a man was I. Do you think I was fit to realize God? No, I was unfit.

On the day when I heard the command, "Love your neighbours. Help them as I have helped you," that scene and what Swamiji had told me came into my mind. "You want to realize God without changing yourself. You want to see the light without operating upon your own cataract. No, it is not possible." At that time another realization also dawned. For many years I had been searching for the answer to a question. I pray to God and repeat His name; like everybody else, but do I love Him?

You love someone with whom you have a relationship, but I had no relationship with God. He is God and I am a man is not a proper relationship. The relationship became clear in Rikhia: "I am your servant and you are my master. I will live as you ask me to live. Ever since that time, whatever I do is not with the idea of achieving realization, salvation, moksha, emancipation, kaivalya or nirvikalpa samadhi. No, I am doing it because He told me to.





Serve, Love, Give

Swami Sivananda's fundamental philosophy of life was service. His priorities were: "Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize." Meditation was at the end of his list, a long way off. Whereas you start your spiritual life with meditation, my guru's spiritual life started with service and culminated in meditation. The beginning of spiritual life stems from service to humanity.

Swami Sivananda used to say was that just as there is an education system from kindergarten to university, similarly there is a schooling system in spiritual life. The first level is service, the second is love, the third is give. God exists, so you have to think about Him. You have to meditate and pray. You have to purify your heart. I asked, "But how?" He said that the kindergarten of spiritual life is service. What comes next? Loving others. Then the next class is give, give and give. This is primary spiritual schooling - serve, love and give. This elementary class of spiritual life will prove very useful.

After this, Swami Sivananda said that we should purify the self: purify the mind, heart, intentions and actions. Practise *ahimsa*, non-violence, *satya*, truthfulness, *brahmacharya*, sensual restraint, *aparigraha*, non-possessiveness, *tapasya*, austerity, *asteya*, honesty, *shaucha*, cleanliness, *santosh*, contentment, and so on. Purification means that just as you clean your dirty clothes by putting them in detergent, so you put your heart in detergent, soak it and clean it.

Swami Sivananda said, "Suffering and pain is the crucible into which nature throws a man whenever she wants to make him a sublime superman." You have to accept pain. Don't be afraid of suffering. Don't depend on the things of worldly life. Riches will not go with you. Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." You should not depend on wealth as your security in life. Security in life is purification.

After purification, Swami Sivananda spoke of meditation. He said that meditation is like going to college, it is higher education. In meditation or prayer you enter a state of *shanti*, peace or tranquillity, where you become one with God. There is only God in front of you, because God is everywhere. He exists in every particle. Finally, comes realization.

So, serve, love and give are elementary education. Purify is intermediate education, and meditation is college education. Realization is postgraduate education. This is the curriculum of spiritual schooling. Swami Sivananda gave me the mantra: serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize, be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate, bear insult, bear injury. This is very difficult, but it is the highest sadhana!

It took me many years to emulate my guru and practise his principles. He used to say, "Whatever you have, give it to others. It does not belong to you." I never understood him then, but now I do. Nothing belongs to me, nothing is mine. I am just a medium.



A Lesson in Service

Fifty or sixty years ago I was living in Rishikesh at Sivananda Ashram, on the banks of the Ganga. I was given a room in the ashram and while living there a peculiar sickness developed. I felt that I must have the minimum number of possessions. If there were too many things around me, I would feel agitated and ill at ease. The room that I lived in had only the bare necessities. There was only one bed, a blanket and a glass.

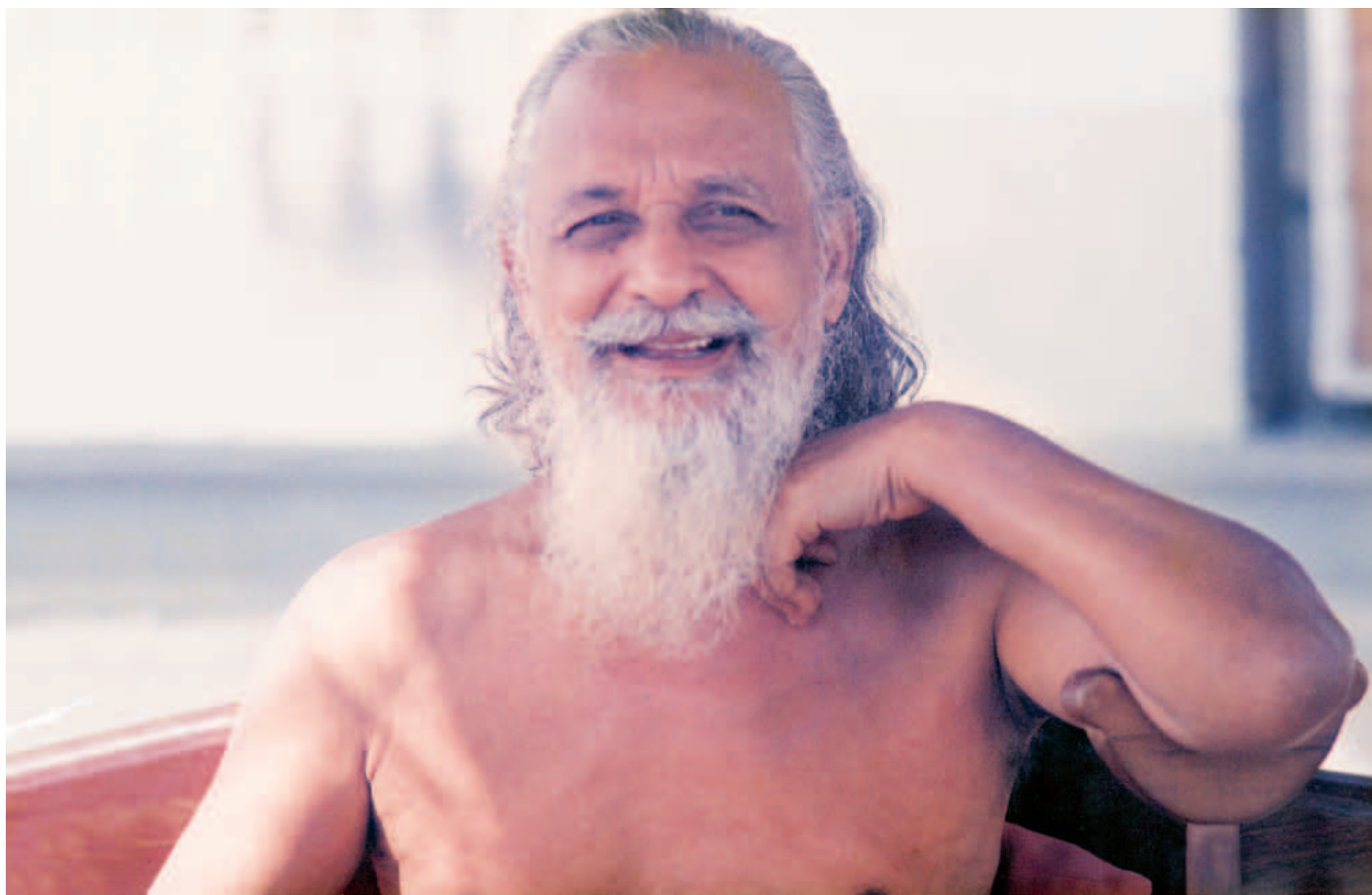
One day Swami Sivananda came to my room on his rounds and asked, "Don't you have a proper bed?" I replied, "No, and I don't need one either." He said, "Yes, yes, you must have a bed and at least one extra blanket." I repeated that I did not need them, but he insisted that I must keep them as Rishikesh was a place of pilgrimage where people come and go. A stranger or a sick man might walk in at any odd time of night. The ashram was a big place where over a hundred people lived. If someone fell sick, he had to make do with a glass of warm water as a remedy.

The next day Swami Sivananda gave me glasses, mattresses, tea leaves and so on. By insisting that I keep some extra things for the use of others, he showed a new way, which was rather difficult for me at the time. There was an empty almirah in my room and very soon it became so full that there was nowhere to keep even my own blanket. So I placed one mattress on top of the other and managed to sleep on top of the heap.

A sannyasin has to follow this ideal that Swami Sivananda placed before us. Have you ever seen a mango tree eating its own fruit or a rose bush enjoying the scent of its own flowers? When you produce or keep something for others, not for yourself, that is called altruistic service, *paropkara*. It means doing what is good for others, not indulging in selfish pursuits.

The sannyasin who thinks least about his or her own self will have no stress and tension. If you become anxious about the health or poverty of others, it helps you positively. Altruistic stress has a constructive, benign influence, whereas stress due to selfish concerns has a malign effect. Thus Swami Sivananda always exhorted us, "Worry and anxiety will not harm you if it is not for your own selfish problems." That is the only condition.







Love One Another

Swami Sivananda's life was an example of compassion and generosity. He was simple, devout and kind. His life was very different from most of the sannyasins I have come across. His heart was very large. He was happiest when he was feeding and giving to people. His philosophy in life was that God is real and everything else is unreal. His heart was completely open, without any doors or windows. He was not at all interested in accumulating wealth. He would say, "Spend more than you have. Feed the poor. Give them medicine. Give blankets to the pilgrims. For drinking water during the summer and extend all possible help to the sadhus and sannyasins."

Swami Sivananda always used to think about others. Whenever he met people, he did not give spiritual lessons as I do. He would always say nice things and he would give them clothes, food and medicine for their illnesses. He could remember the names of each one of his acquaintances from thirty-five to forty years back. If a man had become old, he would then ask, "How is your grandson? He was in the eighth class.

Where is he now? What is he doing? You should know about the person you love. If I love you, I should know everything about you, especially your difficulties, ambitions and desires. If I know nothing about you, if I don't want to know anything about you, then I can't care for you.

The best thing you can do to help people is to love them from your heart. True love has no conditions at all. Even if a person talks negatively about you and harms you, still you should love him. I am not talking of love between a man and a woman, but of that love which is an expression of compassion for all beings. Love has to be defined in a wider perspective.

Although you may understand this principle, it is still very difficult to practise. True love is an act of unconditional giving, not taking. What Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Zoroaster and other saints and sages have said about love is not easy to practise. The most difficult thing is to love your neighbour. You may have experienced your neighbour as your worst enemy. However, the saints did not say, "Love your distant neighbour," they said, "Love your neighbour," because they knew that he is the one who is always creating problems for you in the neighbourhood.

Love is an art and a science that you will have to learn. You prepare yourself for love by little acts of kindness. Whenever anyone came to ask Swami Sivananda for something, he would say, "Go on, give it to him." Once he completely cleaned out the whole ashram. We had no blankets because he had given them all away. The first thing he used to say was, "Namo Narayan, are you all right? Do you like chocolate?" The reply would come, "Yes, Swamiji, I do like it." So he would say, "Okay, Swami Satyananda, give him some chocolate." Then to another he would say, "O Buddhaji, how are you? I have a shirt for you."

The day the philosophy of love and bhakti is understood by humanity, the world will become a place for the gods to visit. All the gods who are supposed to be in heaven will say, "Let us go to this blessed Earth. There is plenty of love there." But today they say, "No, no, no. We don't want to go there. They may take our luggage or purse, they may set off a land mine or we may get shot somewhere." When mankind learns how to love and serve one another, to be kind and tolerant to one another, to help one another and to share the problems, worries and ideas of others, then your family, your society and the world will be a better place to live in.

All Knowledge is Within

In 1943 I went to Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh and said, "I have come here to live with you." He said, "Okay, live here but first of all clean your mirror. Whatever you want to achieve is within you, it is not within me. The guru doesn't give anything. The soul, the *atma*, is the truth within us. Consciousness is within us, the light is within us. *Brahman*, the ultimate reality, is within us. Everything is within us. Beyond darkness is a light within us."

I worked in the ashram for twelve years. The circumstances were very difficult. Our ashram was not rich and at times we had to beg for food and sleep on the floor. There were mosquitoes, scorpions and snakes, and the water was dirty. But we were not bothered. I would cook food, clean utensils, chop wood and climb six kilometres uphill to the District Collector's office to get a permit to buy sugar from the ration shop. Every day I would bring fifty buckets of water from the Ganga to the ashram, and collect bel leaves from the forest for Shiva's worship.

I was so lean and thin that you could count all the bones in my body, but I had so much energy that I could swim across the Ganga five times a day, and climb trees like a monkey. I worked as a servant in the ashram, but those were such happy days. There is so much joy living as a disciple.

Sometimes I was asked to clean the library and while dusting I would see the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda there. This was a great temptation. The Upanishads and other texts also used to tempt me. I said to Swamiji, "There are so many books. Can I take a few?"

He replied, "Satyananda, you are talking of injection, you should talk of education. Injection is when knowledge comes in from outside. When inner knowledge is revealed outside, that is



called education. What will you achieve by reading the Vedas? All knowledge is within you. The knowledge of the four Vedas is within you. The human being is all knowledgeable. Atma, your spirit, is omniscient." He used to say that not only human beings, but every creature basically and fundamentally is God.

After I had worked in the ashram for twelve years, Swami Sivananda told me to teach yoga. Believe it or not, I have never read a book on yoga. I have written them, but I have never read them because I was convinced by Swami Sivananda that it is all within me.

God's Name

Swami Sivananda was a lover of Rama's name. He was also a devotee of kirtan. His voice was very sweet and very powerful. He used to compose songs in English, Hindi, Tamil and Sanskrit. His first question to anyone who came to see him was, "Can you sing? Can you dance? Okay, let's have a performance this evening." He loved music and classical dance.

Swami Sivananda said, "Whenever you start an ashram or any such project, you should begin with God's name." So he started unbroken Ram Naam sankirtan, which is sung every day continuously for twenty-four hours. It was our duty to sing for one hour daily. A small temple with a hall was constructed for this purpose and two lamps were lit.

I had been a devotee of Rama from childhood. Born into the Ikshvaku family line, I inherited the lineage of the sun. When my guru gave me the mantra Om Namah Shivaya, I was in a fix. I asked him, "How do I reconcile the two lords?" My guru said, "Never mind, meditate on Rama and chant the mantra of Shiva." I obey his command; I play a double role. Inside I am with Sri Rama and my mouth chants Shiva's mantra. The best part is that when I meditate on Sri Rama, Lord Shiva is highly pleased. When I say, "Om Namah Shivaya," Sri Rama becomes very happy. Thus Sri Rama is happy and Lord Shiva, too, is happy. I behold joy, I get sweets in both hands.

My guru was a Vedantin, *Aham Brahmasmi*, 'I am Brahman'. He kept a photo of Sri Krishna posing as Vitthala in his room, and he would prostrate in front of the picture in the morning. In those days I had an Arya Samaj background, and I used to wonder what it meant. Was it blind naivety or a facade? But my guru was a very good and sincere man. His devotion was genuine and nobody could call him a hypocrite. One who lives with God has a childlike quality.



Swami Sivananda used to ask me, "Do you remember His name all the time?" I would reply, "Swamiji, I try, but mostly I forget because I am so busy with administration." He would say, "While doing administrative work, you still remember to eat, sleep and go to the toilet, so how can you forget this most

natural thing. God's name is your very breath. Your whole life has to be dedicated to this." My guru also said, "Moreover, you are a sannyasin. A sannyasin's only hope is God's name. A sannyasin who depends on his scholarship will not survive in spiritual life. He will certainly have a downfall."

Atmabhava

I never tried evolving, moulding or developing myself. Everything has happened of its own accord, but the main reason was my guru's entry and presence in my life. Without him stepping into my life, the transformation would never have taken place. I was a hard and heartless person, but by guru's grace I began to soften.

Swami Sivananda would call all the sweepers and scavengers, feed and clothe them, give them tea, wash their feet, and ask me to do the same. My response was negative. I found it useless and irrelevant for spiritual evolution. However, being his disciple I cleaned, cooked and fed the scavengers. He also started a leper colony for about two hundred and fifty patients behind Kailash Ashram on the banks of the Ganga. I was given the duty of going amongst the lepers and the sick to narrate the Ramayana, but my heart was not in the work. My guru built them huts and gave them goats to rear because lepers are forbidden to raise cows. He forbade them to beg in the streets and would even send them bundles of bidis.

There were thousands of incidents like this in Swami Sivananda's life, which I saw with my own eyes. He believed that those who think well of others have soft, tender hearts. I used to accompany the doctors and distribute drugs and medicines among the lepers. I performed all the duties, but not from my heart. One who thinks ill of others has a hard heart which needs to be pounded. Prakriti breaks hard core hearts. Your heart should be so sensitive that it responds immediately to another's pain.

Before you are able to experience Brahman or the Lord, to see the light or experience enlightenment, you must be able to feel the tragedy in another's life. Otherwise you cannot attain peace. A compassionate and sensitive heart attains knowledge effortlessly. The more distant you are from the suffering of others, the further God will be from you.





Compassion should flow from you. You should experience other people's pain as your own. Those who are unmoved by the sorrow of others and insensitive to their feelings are unworthy of being called human. They share the four instincts of food, sleep, sex and fear with animals and their lives rotate around them.

Now my teaching is that for a generous person the entire world is their family. 'This is mine, this is not mine' are the thoughts of a limited mind. The sum and substance of spiritual life, the best teaching of Vedanta, is *atmabhava*, which means feeling the pain and distress of others as if it were your own.

God is here and now among human beings. Look for Him where He is most needed, not in the temples where people are pouring wealth on His idol. That God is very rich, but the God living among the poor and the downtrodden in the guise of a lame or blind person is needy. Go and look for Him in destitution, hunger and starvation. Go to those houses where there are no hearths.

Jale Vishnu thale Vishnu vishnu parvata-mastake

Jvaalamaalaakule Vishnu sarvam Vishnumayam jagat.

"Vishnu is in the waters, in space, on the mountain tops, in the garland of flames, in every nook and corner of the world."

This is a fact, not a theory. We who have enough of everything should develop the philosophy of *atmabhava* in our lives. When God inspires you to serve others, you take it as His blessing. The work being carried out in Rikhia is not discharged as social service, but in obedience to His command.

Swami Sivananda used to say that most sannyasins and sadhus were wasting their time in India. While the majority of people were dying of hunger, the sadhus ate good food and prayed for their own salvation. When I asked him what to do, he said that he had already said what he had to say. Now I fully understand his vision. When the *yajna* is being performed, I pray for the health and prosperity of everyone. Let everyone be kind and caring to one another and may no one ever experience any distress in their life.



An Open Secret

Swami Niranjana is my successor. He has taken over all my spiritual responsibilities. In 1983 he took over the institutional responsibilities. Now it is 1995. Twelve years have passed and he has proved himself. He underwent sannyasa initiation when he was ten years old. Now he is undergoing tantric initiation. I have handed over to Swami Niranjana the two priceless treasures of my spiritual life, the crystal mala and crystal lingam. The purpose of this Sat Chandi Mahayajna is to transfer what I have to Swami Niranjana. This cannot be done verbally; it is psychic transmission, *shaktipat*.

Although tantric initiation is secret, it is not secret in the sense that it is done in a closed room. I am initiating Swami Niranjana through a secret process, but as all of you are witness to it, it is an open secret. I received the blessings of my guru and of God, not by verbal exchange, but through transmission. I have given them to Swami Niranjana in the same way and now he becomes the guru.

I decided to organize Sat Chandi Mahayajna because people have been asking me for guidance, although I have repeatedly said I no longer want to guide anyone spiritually. Society, friendship and love mean nothing to me. That is the dharma of a paramahansa. I want to enter into deep silence, and I have come to Rikhia for that purpose.

Swami Niranjana has taken over the spiritual charge from me. Now he has to become a global man. A guru has to be able to impart spiritual power to his disciples. For this, Swami Niranjana has undergone initiation at this tantric ceremony of Sat Chandi Mahayajna. To look after the spiritual life of disciples, it is not enough to be a teacher. A guru also has to give insight into spiritual life, and for that, initiation has to be imparted. When you go deep into your mind, the path is uncharted. Only

guru can help you to remove the covering of darkness. Swami Niranjan is now ready for this, and I become free.

Swami Niranjan has been with me since birth. He has given me everything, his youth, his future, his entire life. He has no wife, no child, no bank balance, no property, no ambition and no desire, except service. He always had the feeling, "Whatever you want me to do, I will do." I have always been a tough guru, but Swami Niranjan accepted me as I was. I feel assured that he will lead you all amidst the encircling gloom. Whenever there is darkness in your life and you forget the way, he is the one who can guide you. I have full faith that he will come as a divine light into your spiritual lives.

The Divine Mother is the witness to Swami's Niranjan's tantric initiation and so is everyone present. I have made no other choice. There should be no confusion about my successor. Swami Niranjan is my successor. We pray to Devi, to the Goddess, to make Swami Niranjan into a medium for her expression as she made me. Remain in contact with the Divine Mother and keep everybody else on the right path. Do it in your own way, not in my way. Guru and disciple both have their own natures.

Swami Niranjan's generation is the second, mine was the first. The first generation worked under my directions. Now is the time for the second generation to come into play. The second generation has to go in whatever direction guru leads them. Their sankalpa is to find their own way through their own efforts, to surrender and offer their services to guru and to help in his mission, to apply themselves fully, from the depths of their heart, to spread the guru's light from door to door.



1996



Awakening of Consciousness

Yajna is the celebration of the birth of human civilization. When man discovered fire, his consciousness took an evolutionary leap from the instinctive to the intelligent and intuitive plane. The moment man realized he could use fire to protect, nurture and sustain himself is enshrined in the ritual of yajna developed by the vedic seers.

The Rig Veda, the oldest written text of a most ancient civilization, begins with a tribute to this awesome manifestation of nature.

*Agnim ile purohitam yajnasya devam
ritvijam hotaram ratnadhatamam.*

“We worship the adorable Fire, the chief priest of the yajna. He has the yajna done in due season. He, as the summoner, is capable of bringing the gods to the yajna performed here.”

This statement gives *agni*, fire, the status of divinity or one that illumines the path. We can clearly see how the ceremony of yajna evolved as a commemoration of this historic event, a salute to that foremost quantum leap made by our forefathers.

Agni, the fire god, is the presiding deity of yajna. Without fire, the yajna of civilization cannot move ahead. Fire is the forerunner of our civilization. After fire came grain. Fire and grain are the two eternal principles. When man learnt that grain could be cooked and cultivated, that he could even dispose of his own body in fire and purify it, he reached the first rung of evolution. The tradition of yajna began from that day. In the esoteric sense, fire and grain became catalysts of creation, signifying that we owe them our existence.

Yajna is a celebration of humankind, not a celebration of Hindus, Muslims or Christians, blacks or whites. We are celebrating the day when primitive man, the example of a



universal human being, discovered fire and grain. In yajna, we light the fire in the traditional manner, through friction, and offer grain into it.

Yajna is not just a fire ceremony. It is designed to establish our connection with the cosmic properties abounding in the universe. Yajna has the potential to expand the mind, to launch the consciousness into unknown dimensions and give us the sublime experience of unity with the source of creation.

In the twenty-first century, when global order has been replaced by global disorder, performing yajnas becomes an act of greater importance in order to restore harmony. It is not a religious observance to invoke gods and goddesses; it is knowledge of life and how to live it. It is the process through which you can know yourself and converse with your inner being. It is a chance to fulfil the aim of human life, which is to realize one's own self.



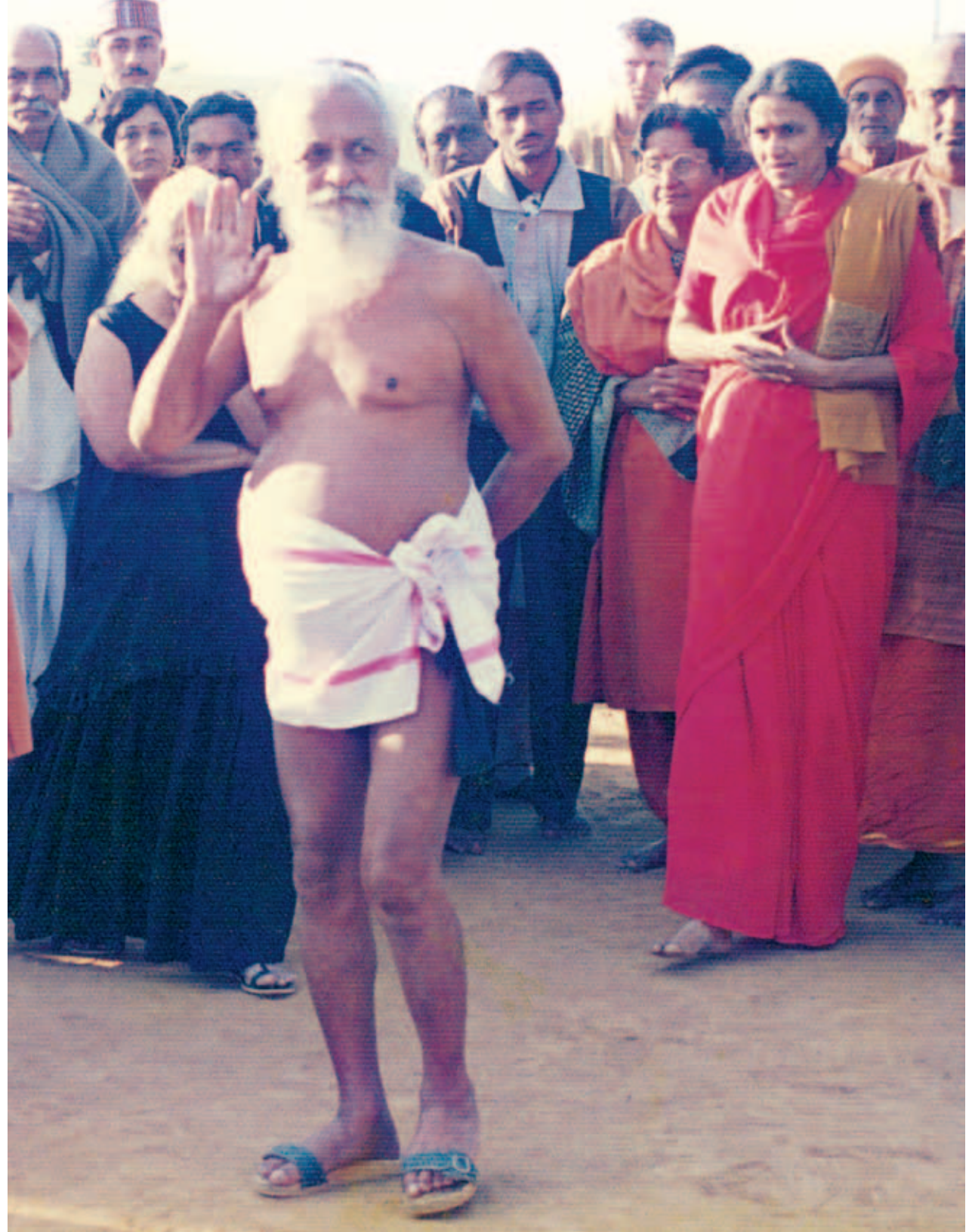
Rajasooya Yajna

The Rajasooya Yajna is an ancient vedic ritual traditionally performed by emperors, kings and sannyasins. After conquering new territories and achieving victory over his counterparts, a king would return to his kingdom and distribute the material wealth to his subjects through the medium of this yajna to ensure that everyone in society had an equal share. In the present age, when there are no kings and emperors, the Rajasooya Yajna can only be performed by sadhus and sannyasins, the givers of spiritual wealth.

In the Rajasooya Yajna, it is the host or performer who is important. The yajna is the vehicle by which the energy of the host spreads throughout the world. If a saint or an enlightened being performs the yajna, he is distributing his attainments, knowledge, peace and inspiration.

The Rajasooya Yajna is always associated with *digvijaya*, victory over the world. A sannyasin does not hold a *rajadanda*, the symbol of a ruler. A sannyasin holds a *yogadanda*, the flagstaff of yoga. As is the custom for a *chakravarti*, or conqueror, to declare what he has conquered, establishing yoga in all corners of the world is our conquest. Taking yoga out of the caves of hermits and presenting it in a manner most useful and beneficial for society and mankind was also a conquest. This is not the age of the sword; this is the age of intellect, of the expansion of mental horizons. It is for this reason that I am sowing the seed of Rajasooya Yajna at Rikhia.

In ancient times, in Dwapara Yuga, the emperor Yudhishtira performed the Rajasooya Yajna at his capital Indraprastha. Sri Krishna, although he was a conqueror in every sense of the word, did not perform this yajna. However, he did preside over the Rajasooya Yajna held by Yudhishtira, which became





famous mainly because Sri Krishna washed the feet and the plates of the guests. All the kings and emperors vanquished by Yudhishtira came to his Rajasooya Yajna and offered him gifts, which he then distributed as prasad to the people.

In recorded history, several kings have performed the Rajasooya Yajna. In the 7th century AD, King Harshavardhana is said to have given away all his personal property at the conclusion of his Rajasooya Yajna. We follow the same tradition. Whatever is given to us as gifts, we return as prasad.

The medium of the Rajasooya Yajna is Sat Chandi Yajna, which is performed to bring about inner transformation. Panchagni Yajna was performed in total isolation, whereas Rajasooya Yajna is done in the presence of and with the participation of many people. Twelve years is the time allotted if it is performed by a spiritually enlightened being. Each yajna has a different emphasis so as to invoke the qualities that we lack in life. Symbolically, these qualities are given in a form or shape, such as an object or item.

The speciality of the Rajasooya Yajna is perfection in the art of giving. The wealth received from all parts of the world is returned to people to make their lives prosperous. For this reason only emperors could undertake it, and the yajna was named Rajasooya, as *raja* means one who governs. Who else but a raja can give with an open hand and joyous heart!

Without giving, a yajna is incomplete. Offering involves giving as well as receiving. You present your offerings to the Divine Mother and she gives you her prasad in return. Whatever you offer is received and returned with a touch of excellence added to it, so you always get back in abundance what you give. Balance between accumulation and distribution is *satkarma*, appropriate and righteous action. The Rajasooya Yajna represents this vision of finding a balance between accumulation and distribution. It exemplifies total giving, which extends from the material to the spiritual. Along with *vastra*, clothing, *patra*, utensils, and *anna*, grain, *jnana*, wisdom, and *bhakti*, pure love, are also given.

We give so that everyone may become equal. Prosperity and contentment are the birthright of everyone. This is not charity. It is the revival of a system from the ancient vedic tradition in which giving and sharing are mandatory. The purpose of the Rajasooya Yajna is the extension of support to uplift the poor and underprivileged.

I am performing the Rajasooya Yajna not as a conqueror of land, wealth or people, but because I was able to establish an empire of yoga, which is the need of our civilization. Yoga works at the spiritual, mental and physical levels to improve the quality of life, and that is also the concept of prosperity in today's society. We have wealth, but we lack quality of life and peace of mind. I am performing the Rajasooya Yajna to re-establish peace of mind, to re-equip people with the riches of contentment, happiness, joy and well-being.

King of Hearts

Empires can be acquired in two ways. One is by means of the sword and the other is by winning over people's hearts. Mine is an empire of the heart. Traditionally, the Rajasooya Yajna is performed by a *chakravarti*, a conqueror. When we speak of conquest, we usually attribute it to territories, kingdoms and countries, but one who conquers the world through an idea, a thought or a philosophy can also be proclaimed a *chakravarti*. A conqueror of hearts is also a *chakravarti*.

Sannyasins are not kings and emperors in the accepted sense, not the owners of land, property and territory. Nevertheless, by inspiring and encouraging people to follow the correct lifestyle, the sannyasins and rishis become the rulers of human hearts and minds.

The seers and sages are duty bound to win over the world. Adi Guru Shankaracharya was credited with conquering the world many centuries ago, as was Swami Vivekananda one hundred years ago. Buddha could not achieve this feat during his lifetime, but after his death Buddhism became universal, spreading throughout the globe.

My guru, Swami Sivananda, told me to spread yoga throughout the world, and I did that. No one challenged me because I possess something very valuable, the blessings of my guru. I served Swami Sivananda for twelve years and I received his blessings in full measure.

I had also received clear directions from my parents, who told me never to retaliate or bear ill will, because only cowards and the weak-hearted do so. The weapon of those who are strong and powerful is love. One who can think, write and speak can conquer the world.

From 1964 until 1983, I travelled to every corner of the world. I took the ancient science and art of yoga out of the forests and ashrams and planted it in hospitals, schools and colleges. Medical scientists, scholars and psychologists, opinion leaders and the general population recognized the theory and method of my system of yoga. Religious leaders recognized the secular character of the yoga I preached and practised.

When I started preaching yoga in India and elsewhere, it was not well known. Wherever I went I taught yoga in my own humble, inimitable way to the ordinary people of India, Australia, Europe and America. This world is made up of ordinary people, and I lived with the people right around the world. Nobody has challenged the theory and practice of yoga that I propounded.

I have received respect and unqualified support for my efforts everywhere, and the love, affection and cooperation of people everywhere. Being acceptable to one and all is also one of the characteristics of a world conqueror. I established

the kingdom of yoga throughout the world among people of all religions and faiths. The Rajasooya Yajna is performed to celebrate that victory.

Today yoga has been recognized and included as a subject in the syllabus of universities, medical colleges, research centres, psychological institutions, jails and national and multinational companies. Now yoga is a universally accepted world culture. I am a *digvijayi*, a victor of the universe, for God has made me His instrument. The truth is that somebody rules the world, somebody rules the heart, and I am the ruler of hearts. I am the king – but the king of your hearts!







Life is a Yajna

Life is a yajna. Although the fire ceremony, mantras and invocation of the deity in symbolic form are part of yajna, they do represent the yajna. Yajna has a threefold meaning: production, distribution and consumption. *Ya* means generation or production, *ja* means distribution and *na* means consumption, assimilation or enjoyment. Yajna is a process of producing, distributing and then consuming. The same process applies in every situation in life. Our yajna is a yajna in the real sense, because to have real experience these three components must be observed.

The Indian tradition, scriptures and saints have all spoken of yajna as a process governing the whole of life. The food that you cook or produce in your kitchen fulfils the first purpose of yajna. The same meal that you distribute to your family fulfils the second purpose. Consumption fulfils the third purpose. All the acts we perform naturally from birth to death are yajna.

Although the three processes of generation, distribution and assimilation occur naturally within us, without any effort, we are not aware they are happening, because our awareness is generally not profound while we are performing mundane activities. During yajna, however, the simplicity and richness, the surcharged energy and the feeling of unity that is generated create a shift in awareness. We become aware of the present moment and see divinity in everything.

By becoming aware of the process of life as yajna, we develop a clear vision. We become aware of the needs of the present and how we can improve the environment to make it more fulfilling for everyone, recognizing that God permeates and lives in everything. The first mantra of the *Ishavasya Upanishad* states, "All that exists in this ever-changing universe is the abode of the Lord. Enjoy whatever the Lord gives you. Do



not covet, for whose indeed is wealth?" This is the vision that develops in spiritual life, and yajna is part of that vision. The fire ceremony, recitation of mantras and invocation of higher forces is the ritualistic aspect, *karmakanda*. When the external ritual becomes internal, that is *upasana*, and when the internal ritual becomes a part of your natural expression in life, that is *yajna*.

The fusion of your energy with the energy of the yajna makes it a process of transformation. In a yajna only pure and unadulterated items are offered. The external ritual has no meaning if your thoughts, feelings and actions are adulterated, impure and inharmonious, if you are not aware of your basic nature and self. When your beliefs and actions are harmonious, life becomes a yajna in which right actions, thoughts, speech and behaviour are offered as oblations into the fire of spirit and an inner unfolding and transformation takes place. When yajna manifests in your life, you begin to perceive yourself as the offerer and the offering. Your actions become the offering.

Yajna is the exoteric aspect of the process of change that yoga sadhana develops internally. The external ritual has to be internalized. For something beneficial and auspicious to become a part of you, a change has to come from within. In yajna it is not the external ritual that is important, but the change within you. If you are able to experience that change, the yajna will be beneficial in your life.

Yajna is an external process which gives rise to an internal experience that you can feel and trust. It is an inner awareness. See your life as a yajna, a process of transformation that takes place constantly and regularly, whatever situation you are in. Everything is a part of the yajna of life. Suffering is a part and happiness is a part because they are the result of your thoughts and actions. Becoming aware of the connection between your external and internal self is the purpose of life.



Tradition

According to the tradition, a yajna has three important aspects. If one aspect is missing, the yajna is incomplete. The first aspect is the ritual, which consists of adorning the area of the yajna, invoking higher forces through the chanting of mantras, kindling the fire and offering oblations into it. The second is *satsang*, association with sadhus and saints, listening to the truth and being in the presence of truth. This is a vital part of the yajna. Singing kirtan, hearing spiritual pronouncements and ideas and chanting the Ramacharitamanas are all part of this aspect.



The third aspect is *daan*, unconditional offering of everything you have for the welfare of others without any personal or selfish expectations. Everyone at a yajna is eligible for daan, rich or poor. Daan is the basis of yajna, offering all that is auspicious, all that nurtures and sustains life. Offering is not just taking something out of your pocket and giving it to someone. It is giving pure substances and items fit to be utilized and consumed by the Divine. The items offered to the Divine are then distributed as prasad to everyone. Offerings at a yajna earn merit a thousand times over in this life and hereafter.

Just pouring ghee on the fire, making oblations and chanting mantras does not constitute a yajna. These components are part of a yajna, but without prasad the yajna is incomplete. These practices have been followed from time immemorial. There is a clear provision for giving in the Rajasooya Yajna. This was the tradition in Treta Yuga when Sri Rama ruled the earth. The same tradition was followed during Dwapara Yuga and it should also be followed during the present age, Kali Yuga.

Yajna is more than a fire ceremony; it is the circulation of peace, prosperity, health and well-being. As these are circulated, we are affected at individual, social and global levels. The purpose of yajna is to connect with the higher compassionate and benevolent energy, with the cosmic Self. Sat Chandi Yajna, the medium of the Rajasooya Yajna, prepares us to receive the highest forces of the Divine through the mantras, the ritual and the giving of prasad. Yajna is the most ancient ritual connecting human beings with the divine essence.



Tool for Change

My purpose for conducting yajnas is to create auspiciousness, a spiritual aura or field just like a church, temple or holy place. A yajna is not a discourse and the purpose is not entertainment. People come to imbibe the spiritual energy which permeates the environment and atmosphere. When they become one with that atmosphere and energy, it creates a subtle transformation and fulfils the purpose of the yajna. You come to the yajna not to feel good, but to become good. The mind should become peaceful. The purpose is to help you find peace, prosperity and good health.

Although hundreds of thousands of yajnas are performed each year in India, the tradition of the yajna performed in Rikhia has a different angle. Our yajna is held in perfect peace; there is no noise or disorder, no festivities or show. It is your good fortune to be able to witness a yajna being performed according to all the rules of the tantra shastras. It is very auspicious to perform yajna at a *chitabhoomi*, a cremation ground. Deoghar is the cremation ground of Sati, the consort of Shiva. Therefore, everyone should receive more goodness, prosperity and good health.

Yajnas have a very special meaning because they invoke the divine spirit and create a spiritual atmosphere. When you are at a solemn and sacred place like a yajna of this magnitude, you are very near to God, and so your thinking and behaviour must change. A change for the better in your thinking will lead you to greater heights and change the future of mankind.

Yajna includes the body, the mind, faith, mantra, ritual as well as your entire life. This combination makes yajna a very, very powerful tool for metamorphosis, transformation and change. This type of yajna requires total commitment and coordination. The body, the mind and the mantras all unite to produce a special effect which transforms your thinking and your life. A yajna like this is a massive and effective scientific process. When you are in an auspicious atmosphere, the



psyche is surrounded by the vibration, and the yajna evokes and creates a change in the perception of the human psyche.

Yajna is an act of *bhakti* or pure love for all beings. It is uncontaminated power which is known to perform miracles, alter events, nullify calamities, make the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk and the mute speak. In bhakti, there is no room for doubt. Bhakti rests on faith, that what you have not seen is there, close beside you, taking care of you, with each breath. During yajna, that faith is restored, as the experience of the divine presence becomes a palpable and living reality.

Our mind is made up of habits, thoughts and desires. We express emotions and feelings. Intuition and wisdom come to the surface from time to time. Otherwise our mind is clouded by the negative and destructive tendencies which permeate our environment. When we come to the yajna with that ordinary mind, it undergoes a subtle transformation which cannot be analyzed rationally by the intellect. That change takes place just by being in the presence of the yajna.

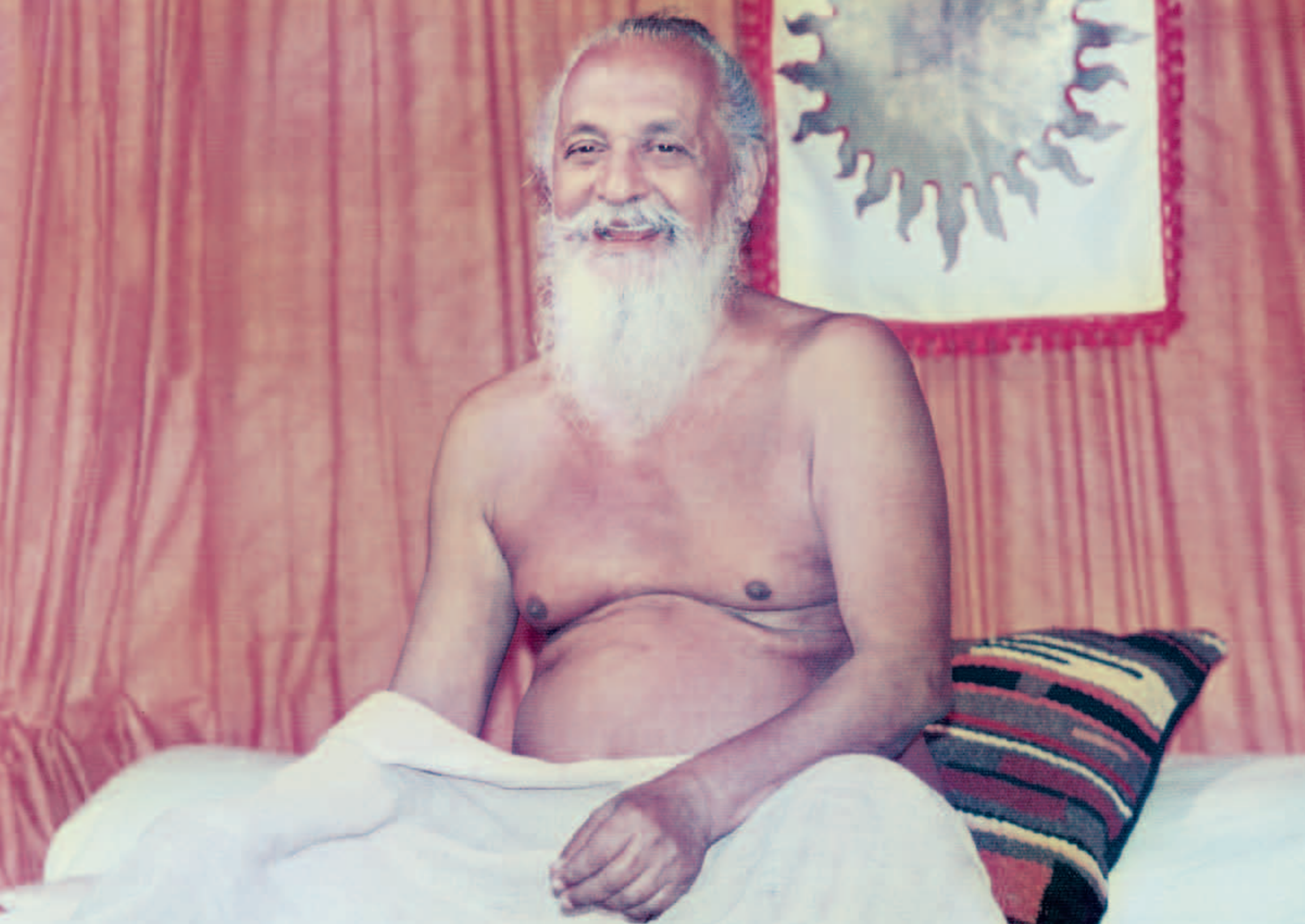
Yajna is esoteric yoga, pure experience. Beyond intelligence and intellect there is a much greater power, intuition or *prajna*, and yajnas give an experience of that. The esoteric nature of a yajna draws out eternal archetypes that are embedded in us. Without our knowledge, with ease and comfort, great transformations take place. Samskaras from the causal body have the chance to express themselves and thus blockages and obstacles are removed,

Yajna is not just ritual, lighting a fire and chanting some mantras. To make a yajna efficacious and derive all of its benefits, one has to pour one's heart and soul into it. Yajnas performed by rishis, munis and enlightened

saints are very dynamic and powerful because they alone can accomplish the total projection of oneself that a yajna demands. It is as if life is poured into the yajna by their very presence.

There are many kinds of yajnas. Some are performed for the welfare of human beings, some to harmonize the cosmic forces, others to revitalize the elements, or to provide material gains and benefits. In the past, yajnas were also conducted to bring about a propitious birth, for example, Rama and his brothers. When a yajna is performed correctly, it becomes a very powerful instrument for bringing about a change. Therefore, yajnas must be performed wisely.





Yajna

The word yajna comes from the root yaj, meaning 'to offer'. It implies the offering of all things that are pure and auspicious, which nurture and sustain life and creation. This offering is made to the cosmic, universal and global energies, to the shakti, in order to sanctify and recharge the elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether, thus increasing their positive and regenerative properties.

The ritual of yajna is designed to establish our connection with the cosmic properties abounding in the universe. Worship, not defiance, is the only way to invoke the benevolence of nature. Yajnas were designed for this purpose because nature becomes happy and pleased through the act of yajna. The rishis and munis devised ways to compensate for the unavoidable, destructive process which is an outcome of the ravages of time. Not only did they try to preserve nature, they went many steps further by worshipping nature in the form of prakriti or Devi. Nature, the earth and all its components were symbolized by the mother who nourishes and feeds us.

In ancient India yajna was a way of life, and had a powerful impact on both human ecology and global ecology. Yajnas were a part of the day-to-day culture, purifying not only the immediate atmosphere, but also the global atmosphere, removing not only external pollution but also mental pollution. Nowadays, it is most important to purify the mental, psychic and emotional atmosphere, which has become corrupt. Yajna is the cure.

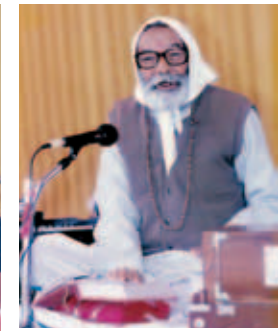
Rishis and munis performed yajnas of all kinds. The water and air were pure and invigorating. Peace and tranquillity pervaded. The dynamism and power of the mantras prevented negative vibrations from entering. There was a profound understanding of the role of each and every speck of creation and of one's own place within that. That is the purpose of a yajna.

Nowadays there is much talk about how to reduce the greenhouse gas effect and global warming, but the greatest

contribution to ecology will be yajna, as it has the power to restore ecological balance. The ingredients offered are all drawn from nature. No chemical, toxic or artificial substances are used. The fuel that is burnt is aromatic and purifies the air. The people who kindle the fire have been devoted to fire worship for generations and generations.

Yajnas restore global order and uphold the world we live in. Yajnas restore balance in nature. Today, more than ever before, this has become essential, when nature is being stripped and shorn of its dignity by modern civilization. We will have to resort to invoking divine forces to descend and fill our hearts with peace so that agitation, disharmony and imbalance disappear and our lives may prosper. This is only possible if nature is happy. If nature is sick, ailing and disturbed by the actions that oppose and destroy its balance, it will certainly rebound onto us, which is what we are experiencing today. Yajnas make nature happy, and this in turn is communicated to the environment and the people who inhabit it. Tantra describes the *yajnansthanam* as a place where the heart is spontaneously filled with peace and totally attuned to nature or *prakriti*. It is in these peaceful moments of harmony and balance that the universe and subsequently human beings are rejuvenated and restored.

Thus yajnas serve as an antidote to the effects of widespread pollution, whether it is air, water, noise, light or even thought pollution that is invading us from all sides. In the twenty-first century, when we are surrounded by artificial products that may serve our purpose very well but have made us strangers to the nature which creates, nourishes and sustains us, it is this simple ancient ceremony of yajna alone that can once again forge the link between us and Mother Nature. It is as relevant to us today as it was to the rishis and munis of the vedic era, who conceived the spirit of yajna to express their love, respect and reverence for Mother Nature.



1997



Divine Grace

Sat Chandi Mahayajna is a most sacred tantric yajna performed to invoke the blessings and auspiciousness of the Mother, Devi Chandi. We worship Devi in the Sat Chandi Mahayajna to bring prosperity, peace and happiness into people's lives. Devi Shakti is the answer to all mankind's difficulties, poverty and sickness. Worship of the Divine Mother is a most powerful and effective way to obtain divine grace. A wish made at a yajna receives divine attention and fulfilment.

A yajna must have a purpose. A sankalpa which defines the aim of the yajna is taken by the host of the yajna. Our sankalpa is for the peace, prosperity and spiritual upliftment of the entire

world. This universal sankalpa guides the performance of the yajna and your participation in it. We invoke Devi's blessings to protect us from natural calamities, to spread her benign arms to avert impending misfortune. When we feel helpless, we surrender to the Divine Mother. In this earthly life there is sorrow and poverty, disease and fear of death, or death. This distress can be remedied by divine grace. Divine grace is the purpose of this yajna.

Our sankalpa mantra is the prayer to the Cosmic Mother. When invoked, she manifests not as a physical body, but in the form of a body created through the power of the mantras. That



divine power manifests in the heart of all those who have fixed their mind on it. When we invoke that cosmic force, feel within you, around you, above you and below you, the presence of this cosmic shakti.

Through this sankalpa we try to connect with inner faith. When your mind is full of faith and when this flows towards God and is reflected in your day-to-day actions, your life is filled with peace and happiness. It does not remain confined to your personal life, but permeates the whole family. The total environment is surcharged. Physical and mental diseases disappear.

All seekers and devotees who have worshipped the Cosmic Mother have had the experience that she is the reliever of all suffering, real or imaginary, psychological or social. She is the bestower of physical and mental health, social and personal prosperity, individual and global peace, and a guide to those who walk the spiritual path. The mere act of participating in such a yajna bestows peace, virtue and merit.

Depending on our frequency of mind, yajna has the power to accomplish our desires, whether it be *artha*, material



fulfilment, *kama*, emotional fulfilment, *dharma*, virtue, or *moksha*, liberation. The highly specialized ritual of yajna is able to touch all dimensions of our life because the power invoked is a divine deity who can grant all our desires, from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Yajna fulfils not only our spiritual desires but also our material desires. Material gain and the welfare of your family are also God's blessing. Yajna is not a ceremony for amusement or a simple experience. Our yajnas are conducted to appeal to Devi to grant us wealth, long life, success, good health and smooth sailing in these disturbed oceans of life. Yajna is the cure, the balm, for our problems because it is a divine force.

People go to a yajna with desires for children, for money, for solutions to all kinds of troubles. In yajna they search for solutions and they get solutions because the awareness is heightened. During the yajna you have to make an important sankalpa for your life, "God, reveal yourself to me in any form you like." That's all, and it will happen.

The success of a yajna is not measured by the expenditure incurred or by the number of people who participate, but on the faith and bhakti generated by the participants. By tuning into the divine vibrations present in the environment, the benefit of yajna is experienced. See the divinity inherent in everyone and everything around you. We need to feel oneness with other beings, with their suffering as well as their happiness.

When you leave the yajna, go with one idea in mind: "I have nothing to be afraid of. Devi will take care of all my difficulties, physical, mental and spiritual." We may be rich, educated, famous sportspersons or people of personal excellence, but we have our own human frailties. Put everything before the Divine Mother during the yajna.

"God, give me enough so that I can give to others" - this should be our prayer. I always pray in the sankalpa for the wealth, long life, success and prosperity of everyone. May everyone be happy, may everyone be healthy and may no one feel pain or sorrow. May everyone receive God's grace. Sorrow, disaster, poverty, disease and fear of death can all be remedied by divine grace. That is the purpose of yajna.

Chandi Devi

Sat Chandi Mahayajna is dedicated to the Cosmic Mother, Devi Chandi, who epitomizes beauty, strength, compassion and grace. She is perfection at its zenith, the creation of divine will. Goddess Chandi is a power that lies within each and every one of us as dormant potential, the source of all knowledge, wisdom and power. Her other name is Kula Kundalini. It is only through her divine intervention that we can build our own personal immunity to future problems.

From the tantric viewpoint, Chandi is the goddess responsible for the transformation that we experience in our lives. She has to be invoked and aroused by worship so that our higher intelligence can be the source by which we protect ourselves. Chandi Yajna is dedicated to invoking this higher intelligence. This esoteric ritual is accomplished through the three tantric tools of yantra, manta and mandala, which influence the archetypal consciousness in us, giving birth to a new awareness.

The story of Chandi is told in the text Durga Saptashati in seven hundred verses. *Sat Chandi* is the recitation of those verses one hundred times. This is the process used to invoke the cosmic power of Chandi. Chandi is the goddess of transformation, psychological, social and spiritual. For external



transformation, Lakshmi is invoked, but for inner transformation Chandi is invoked. We have wealth, but we are not at peace with ourselves. Chandi Yajna is a yajna to bring about this kind of transformation in our life and society.

In Kali Yuga, Chandi is a very important deity. As the fierce aspect of the Mother, she manifests when all human and divine efforts have failed to destroy the demonic influences which may threaten mental peace and the heavenly domain of the divine beings. The story begins with a war between the *devas*, the gods, and the *asuras*, the demons. The entire balance of the universe has been disturbed. Instead of harmony, chaos and struggle prevail. Demoralized, the gods tell their woes to

the trinity, represented by Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer.

The three gods become angry, and a form appears from their anger. That form is Chandi, also known as Durga. She is born from the luminosity of each deva, and she represents the synthesis of all the cosmic powers. The story describes how she vanquishes the demons. In mythology, Durga is seen as the final manifestation of the universal power who appears to establish peace, dharma and justice and to remove human suffering. The entire procedure of the yajna is the re-creation of the cosmic abode of Chandi, the cosmic energy.



Shakti Worship

Worship of Devi is worship of shakti. *Shakti* means primal energy, ability, capacity, strength. Shakti worship is very ancient and its basis is tantra. It is much more ancient than Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, or the Vedic religion. Shakti is inherent in all matter, so it is inherent in us too. In tantra, shakti resides at the root of sushumna, in mooladhara chakra. The easiest way to awaken that shakti is by developing the relationship of mother and child.

In Shakta tantra there are many systems for worshipping shakti, the primal energy, from which the creator as well as creation has come. The form of God as the Mother existed at the very beginning of creation. Adi Shakti is the original or primal mother. Who can the original creator have been but the mother. It is the mother, not the father, who creates.

We worship the eternal Mother who has no particular form, but is in every form. We should not say that she is formless. She has no particular form, even as clay has no particular form, but every pot is a form of clay. It is her glory we see in the sun and the moon, in all forms of life. We worship the Mother whom yogis know as kundalini shakti, Vaishnavas as Lakshmi, Shaivas as Gauri and Amba, and Christians as Mary.

Over time, the social traditions relegated the Mother to the background. The masculine concept of divinity spread all over the globe and it was widely accepted that God is supreme and nothing is beyond God. There was no thought about the human rights of a female because in most religions the feminine gender was considered to be inferior. But this was not so in the Shakta tradition.

In the Shaiva tradition, Shiva is on the right and Shakti is on the left, but in the Shakta tradition Shakti stands with one





leg on Shiva, who sleeps. Moreover, shakti is seen as the sole power in the body at mooladhara chakra. She is the centre or nucleus of all matter. She is also the nucleus within you, not just of your mind, but of your soul.

Shakti worship is performed in various ways, some purely vedic as well as purely tribal. Many indigenous tribes in India and other parts of the world worship a female deity, not strictly according to tantric or vedic rituals, but they still perform ritual worship.

In tantric worship, you are dealing with a mysterious, hidden power. Shakti has three forms: benign, destructive and creative. If you awaken her destructive aspect, that is a negative approach, and she will give you a kick. Shakti should be worshipped to awaken her benign powers. You must love and respect your mother. Worship of Devi gives quick rewards, blessings there and then, so rules must be observed.

There is a certain grace and dignity in worshipping the Mother Goddess, and one has to respect that. Although there are many methods of worshipping Devi, worship performed with faith and devotion is best.

Systematic methods and procedures are necessary for any action, not just for worship. When the correct procedure is followed, everything follows a specific order and there is no confusion. Vedic rituals may allow some leniency, but this is not the case in the tantric worship of Devi.

Tantra is a pure science of dedication to *Matri shakti*, mother power. In the Chandi Yajna, God is perceived as the mother, the creator, not as the father. She is the ultimate dynamic power. Therefore, in Shakta tantra the Divine Mother is considered to be the first creator, the Adya Shakti. She is the Adi Janani of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, and exists in the heart of all beings.

Devi is a Mother

Devi is a mother, not a goddess. Worship of the Cosmic Mother is a very ancient culture. From the beginning of creation, it is the mother who has given birth to the child, not the father. The mother is the child's real friend. Love for the mother is intrinsic, natural and spontaneous. Some religions denounced Mother worship, but not in India, where it is considered to be supreme. *Devi* means luminous, illumined, lustrous, the light that is within. Devi understands only one language, the language of the heart.

Who can the original creator have been but the Mother, because the father does not create. Therefore, in Shakta tantra the Mother is considered to be the first creator, although Christians, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Jews do not accept it. The Mother is the preserver and also the



destroyer. It is by her command that the celestial beings, human beings and all of creation moves. We should not ignore the Mother.

The easiest approach of a spiritual aspirant towards God is to have the relationship of mother and child. Devi is the mother and you are her child. She has tolerance, forbearance, eternal forgiveness, compassion and love for every child, whether blind or incapacitated, thief or criminal. To see Devi as a mother is a very pragmatic approach. If she is an abstract

and formless goddess, then she has only a psycho-emotional reality, not a true reality. The one closest to me is my mother. That is the concept of Devi, the concept of mother and the concept of true reality.

The mother is always an embodiment of compassion, kindness and forgiveness. We are full of mischief, passion and ill will, weaknesses and bad habits. Still we want to be forgiven, but this pardon can only come from the Divine Mother. That is why one form of God is the mother. She is the giver and nourisher



of life. She has the power to bless everyone, but she does not punish anyone. God may punish, because the father is known to get angry, but the mother has infinite tolerance.

It is much easier, more natural and practical to see God as a mother. For a child the relationship with the father is a distant one compared to the relationship with the mother. The child is nurtured by the warmth drawn from the mother and maintained by the mother's milk. If you have any difficulties in life, just forget everything and go to the Mother. She will never consider your sins. She is nothing but beauty, grace and kindness. She will destroy all your negative qualities, all the dark forces. That is why she incarnates in us.

When we talk about the Divine Mother, love and devotion is only one aspect. We can also ask her for some pocket money, chocolates and sweets. So put your demands before her. If you have family, mental or business difficulties or even sickness, just make a request, "Please help me."

The Sat Chandi Yajna is the worship of God as the Cosmic Mother. Most of us think of God as the father. In a patriarchal society, God has to be like a father. However, in a matriarchal society, God has to be like a mother. Now the entire world is moving towards a matriarchal system. Everywhere women have more freedom, authority and respect. As we move towards a matriarchal society, it is appropriate to worship the Mother Goddess so that she does not become angry with us. If she says, "You fellows have tortured me for such a long time," I'll say, "No, I have been worshipping you for such a long time. I called you here for Sat Chandi Yajna."



Kanya Pooja

Kanya worship is an important part of the Sat Chandi Yajna. It presents a new philosophy of life in which a little girl is acknowledged and worshipped as a replica of the Divine Mother. The concept of the kanya is unparalleled in human philosophy. *Kanya* means 'virgin'. In India, girls officially become kanyas or virgins at the age of nine. The concept is fully explained in the scriptures of Shakta tantra. The discovery that a young virgin was capable of symbolizing and representing the Cosmic Mother was made by a rishi. Could you ever think of your little daughter as the replica of the Mother? No. This idea

did not come to the average person, but to the rishis, the great seers and realized sages

The replica of greed is money, the replica of passion is a woman, the replica of fear is a tiger and the replica of the goddess, the Cosmic Mother, is the kanya. The kanyas are very pure, simple and innocent. Until puberty, they are not aware of the jugglery of sensual life. Once puberty approaches, the hormones transform the body, emotions and mind. However, there are girls who remain virgins mentally and spiritually even after puberty. They are virginal by nature and it is these girls

who come for sannyasa. A girl may be a virgin in the sense that she has not menstruated or had sexual interaction, but that alone is not virginity. Not every nine-year old girl can be worshipped as a kanya kumari. Virginity is a natural quality that belongs to one's genetic structure. This is the meaning of virginity in vedic astrology.

The concept of kanya kumari or virgin is also found in Christianity. Although Mary was a mother, she was still believed to be a virgin because she reflected particular qualities that belong to a virgin. One who has the basic quality and divine grace of a virgin can give blessings. During the Kumari Pooja, on the final day of the Sat Chandi Yajna, the girls are looked upon as the form of the Mother and worshipped as Devi. We dress them, feed them and wash their feet, superimposing the concept of Devi on them, and receive their blessings. The kanyas are the Divine Mother's most beautiful form. They represent purity of soul. Our soul is virgin, and its pristine beauty and glory cannot be contaminated. However, you cannot see that virgin soul, so you have to form a concept of it.

The kanyas of Rikhia, who host the Sat Chandi Mahayajna, represent that virgin reality. They represent your virgin soul, your pure spirit, your inner being, which you are unable to see. In Devi tantra, the kanya or virgin is considered to be the true embodiment of the Cosmic Mother. We are her children and she is our mother. We should remember this and feel it. In the tantric festival of Sat Chandi, a young girl is regarded as the embodiment of divine energy, and there are replicas of the goddess everywhere. Let us experience this yajna like these little children, with innocence, purity and spontaneity.





Yantra, Mantra and Mandala

In tantra, there are three important symbols of divine energy known as mantra, yantra and mandala. These are the three symbols of God, of formless reality. *Mantra* is sound, *yantra* is a geometrical diagram and *mandala* is a pictorial form of anything with the three dimensions of depth, width and height. Yantra, mantra and mandala are psychic forms, representations of divinity. When sadhana is performed utilizing these three tools, the higher mental faculties are awakened and the mind becomes powerful. The aim of tantric sadhana is not to utilize these powers for personal motives or material gain, but to propitiate and harmonize the energies which at present are unharnessed and uncontrolled in the individual as well as in external nature and in the cosmos.

The basic principle of yajna, which can be traced back to the core of tantric and vedic philosophy, is the profound idea that man is a microcosm of the macrocosm that is the universe. Whatever formed entities are in the universe, the same are in the human body and vice versa, and as such every human being is equal to the entire universe.

The experience of energy, whether microcosmic or macrocosmic, needs to be awakened within us all if we wish to rise above gross mundane experience and enter subtler realms of that tremendous force of prakriti. Yajna aims to establish this experience, as the rites and rituals of yajna strictly adhere to the laws of nature and do not oppose them in any way.

Each yajna involves the creation of a mandala, and each mandala invokes a specific cosmic energy. The rituals involve

magnetic movements or *mudras*, to guide the macrocosmic prana shakti into the microcosmic mandala that had been created. The mandala represents the cosmic image or symbol, at one point and location in time, which realigns all the magnetic energy fields in the universe.

Every yajna has four basic parts. The first part is creation of the form; an inert mandala is created without life or prana shakti. The second part is *prana pratishtha*, where the image or form is infused with prana shakti. The third part is *upachara*, intensification and magnification of the energy that has been invoked. The fourth part is *parayana* or *prasthan*, the release of energy, the culmination of the yajna. Mantras are an essential component of all four parts of the yajna.

Throughout the Sat Chandi Yajna, mantras are chanted for the propitiation of Chandi Devi. More than the mechanics



of the ritual, it is mantra that makes the yajna efficacious. Through mantra the power of the chosen deity of the yajna is awakened and communicated. Mantras harness the elemental energies for the benefit of society, the planet and the whole of creation.

Mantras generate an energy field, inducing an altered state of consciousness at the conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels. The power of the mantra is harnessed for spiritual upliftment and also to create an environment of peace, prosperity and beatitude. In yajna, the energy invoked by the chanting of the mantras and the creation of yantras and mandalas focuses the cosmic power.

To focus the mind a form is needed. Divine power is revealed in the form of mantra, yantra and mandala. In Sat Chandi Yajna the form of Devi is a mandala, and in

the periphery there are yantric forms. The representation of Devi is a symbol, not an idol or statue. We invoke the formless into a formless space. We have made a representation of her, and given her a name and a sex, but she is neither male nor female. The feminine aspect of creation is always symbolized by a triangle, the first form to emerge out of creation. It is so placed that it becomes the cosmic yantra, known as Sri Yantra. There are invisible things in the universe which are in the form of geometrical formations, yantras, and these are the ultimate formation of the whole universe.

Unless you bring about a change in the quality of consciousness to unfold the subtle layer of reality, you cannot experience yantra, geometrical mantra. Develop that state of consciousness where you can see and experience a sound in its

subtle form. The concrete external form of Devi is established for this purpose.

The yajna mandap is the pavilion of Devi, but it is also our subtle form, our spiritual form, our inner form. The worship is being performed in our inner self. The scriptures declare, "This human body is a temple and this living being is an immortal god within it." This physical form is a place of worship, the abode of the soul, the abode of God. The god residing in this body is the human being. That god exists all the time. That soul or spirit is *sanatana*, eternal. That soul is God.

The yajna mandap is the symbolic representation of the human body. The human body is the pavilion where the yajna is being performed. The *karta*, the doer, of this yajna is 'I' and the *devata*, the divine being, of this yajna is 'you'. Sit in the yajna mandap with this feeling in mind.





Serving the Mother

Durga Saptashati is a very important tantric text containing seven hundred slokas about the Cosmic Mother. The spirit of service to the Divine Mother should be the guiding force behind your recitation during the five days of the yajna. We should serve the Mother with the same spirit of dedication as servants serve their masters. We are all here to serve the Mother. Once Devi has been invoked and installed, we begin the recitation, our service to the Divine Mother.

Traditionally, in India, Durga Saptashati is chanted twice each year during Navaratri, the nine days dedicated to the worship of the Cosmic Mother. It is a dialogue between Sage Markandeya, one of the greatest thinkers of the ancient spiritual tradition, and the warrior King Surat. Markandeya tells Surat about the powers, omnipresence and creation of the Mother Goddess. The chanting of each verse is chorused by a combination of three *beeja* or seed mantras: *Aim Heem Kleem*. *Aim* is the beeja mantra of Saraswati, *Hreem* of Lakshmi, and *Kleem* of Durga or Kali. These beeja mantras awaken the energies within the individual as well as the environment.

When you enter this world, you undergo pain and pleasure. You have wealth and affluence, but still there is fear lurking in your mind. Devi relieves you of psychological and unfounded fears so that you become free. Try to learn how to recite Durga Saptashati. Recite it in your homes at Navaratri and encourage your children too. It is so easy to learn. Otherwise just repeat mentally the mantra we have given you in a relaxed way as if you are talking to a friend. Devi is not a goddess, she is a mother. You are closest to your mother, but you have never seen a goddess.

The Cosmic Mother has been epitomized by Adiguru Shankaracharya in the poem dedicated to beauty known as *Saundarya Lahari*. Even the three lords, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, bow their heads at the feet of the Divine Mother.



*Trayaanaam devaanaam trigunajanitaanaamapi Shive
Bhavet poojaa poojaa tava charanayoryaa virachitaa
Tathaa hi tvatpaadodvahanamanipeethasya nikate
Sthitaa hyete shashvanmukulitakarottamsamukutaah.*

“The worship of your feet, O consort of Shiva, is also worship of the three deities Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh born of your three gunas. They require no special worship because they are ever waiting with joined palms held above their diademed heads in salutation to you by the side of the foot-stool of diamonds that bears your feet.”

You come to worship Devi. Keep your heart and mind focused on that experience alone. Devi, the embodiment of *nirguna*, formlessness, the one whom I have installed in my heart as Mother, worship her for the duration of the yajna. Focus your whole self on serving the Divine Mother.



1998



Sita Kalyanam

Sita Kalyanam is organized for the welfare and well-being of the young brides in my neighbourhood. At first I named this grand wedding ceremony Ram Vivaha, but later I renamed it Sita Kalyanam. *Vivaha* means wedding ceremony. *Kalyanam* means welfare, well-being, prosperity. Through marriage, social as well as spiritual well-being is attained.

The purpose of Sita Kalyanam is significant. Marriage is an extremely costly affair for the poor and needy. In this region a girl in the family is a matter for worry. Therefore, I decided to ease their burden by organizing Sita's wedding, thereby doing good to the young brides of these families. Through this wedding celebration, I ensure the welfare of hundreds of young girls whom I have accepted as my own daughters.

As sannyasins we cannot take part in the wedding celebration, but we can certainly help the parents by arranging good luck kits. This is another purpose behind calling the celebration Sita Kalyanam. When we called it Ram Vivaha, nobody understood the purpose and we were given chocolates, sweets and blankets, which are not requisite items. For good luck kits, gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, gems, saris, ornaments, watches and such fineries are given, as are cycles, motorbikes and television sets.

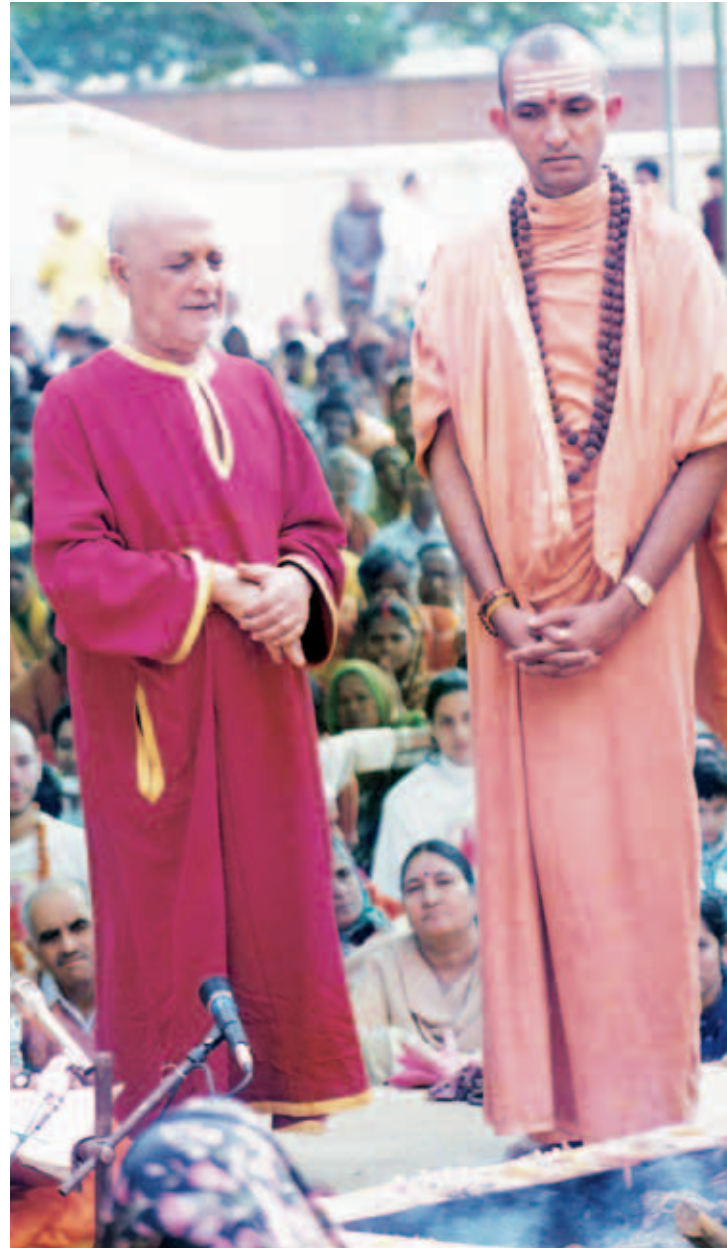
I asked the village chief to provide a list of all the newly married girls. I told him to spread the news that all these brides would be gifted with good luck kits at Sita Kalyanam. At that time I had nothing to offer them, yet I went ahead and extended the invitation to all the young girls in the vicinity. Once we renamed the occasion Sita Kalyanam, we were flooded with good luck kit items. Whatever work you undertake must have the purpose of doing good to others.



The girl who wants to survive and make headway needs stability and security. This is a female's inborn nature. I want to help these women who want to preserve their femininity instead of imitating the rough and tough ways of the male. Wherever she goes, I want her to be the ruler and the queen. Women are fond of jewellery and ornaments to beautify themselves with. When you present a sari, a diamond ring or even just a small ornament to a girl or a woman, she is always very pleased. This is her characteristic feature.

The philosophy behind such celebrations is based in fact. As a sannyasin and as a man, I am indebted to my mother who gave me the secrets of success in life, who guided me and put me on the right path, from whom I imbibed all the good samskaras that percolate through my being, and who also let me leave home in search of God. You may write off any other debt in this world except the debt to your mother. The mother is the giver of life, wisdom and samskaras. She shapes the destiny of her child.

I hold my mother exclusively responsible for everything I have achieved and lost in my life so far. Therefore, my first priority is to repay my mother. What can be done to clear this debt? In India, majority of women are exploited and downtrodden. An ordinary woman has no means of education, advancement or legal protection and it is we who have deprived her of all these things. Therefore, I proclaim it as the duty of each and every sannyasin to help and support these women.



I am not a great man. I am a small man living in a small place, so I decided to begin in a small way. Even if I can bring about the upliftment of a limited number of girls, my life will have become worthwhile and I will be satisfied. Therefore, I decided to undertake Sita Kalyanam within the confines of my neighbourhood.

This is the emotion of a father or a brother, not of a son. A father looks after the marriage of his daughter and a brother looks after the marriage of his sister. In this way you are training your emotions in the right direction. Only then can they be transformed into bhakti. Otherwise most people are totally dissipated. You have a chariot with four horses: one goes to the right, another to the left, the third pulls up and the fourth will not move. Now which way will your chariot go? The untrained senses, mind and emotions all have to be channelled properly.

In Indian culture, to help with a daughter's marriage is the most important of all duties. If you cannot marry your daughter properly, you are not fulfilling your obligation to society. There are two types of cultures – robust and fragile. A fragile culture should be handled with care. With a robust culture it does not matter. You can turn it upside down or sideways, roll it or throw it and it will not break. It is very important to preserve the robust culture, whether it is rich or poor, literate or illiterate. The mantra for preserving the seed of this culture is, "Have your daughter married at the right time, to a proper person, in a very proper way." This is the dharma of our culture, religion, society and nation, and the dharma of all parents.



Marriage

The principle and philosophy of marriage is union, not between matter and matter or energy and energy, but between time and space. It is union between the mathematical principle of plus and minus. Nobody knows when the principle of union first took place. When purusha and prakriti united millions, billions and trillions of years ago, this perceptible universe came into being. The union between purusha and prakriti is the union between consciousness and nature. When this union is the beginning of the universe, the cause of the whole cosmos, why shouldn't man and woman unite? This is the tradition of union.

In Indian society, marriage plays a very important role. We sannyasins who have renounced and forgone the joy of marriage do not deny its importance. We think marriage is not only important for a woman, but also for a man. This wild beast of a man has to be domesticated. The process of domestication is possible only through marriage because the ruler is not a male, the ruler is a female. She is the one who domesticates the wild man and teaches him how to behave. So we do not decry marriage at all, rather we want you to marry.

In all civilizations and cultures, past and present, emphasis has always been laid on the marriage of women. A girl should be married properly because she is the creator of quality. She can create a Rasputin or a Hitler and she can create a Christ or a Rama. She can create saints and sinners. She can create something of quality or something substandard. Therefore, care must be taken regarding her marriage.

From the moment a girl is born, especially in India, her parents are obsessed with the idea of her marriage. It was the same in Europe in earlier times. In Asia, a girl's marriage is still





an obsession for the parents, because they realize that a girl is the most important member of society. She is the most precious jewel and, therefore, it is the duty of every parent to see that she is married properly.

In Indian culture the bond between husband and wife does not break even after death. This is the ideal form of marriage and it should be adhered to. In the vedic culture there was no divorce, although it was accepted that problems arose in the family between husband and wife. The Vedas said that if a husband and wife could not get along together, they may live separate lives, but the question of remarriage did not arise. The reason was very simple. Not only in India, but everywhere in the world, a woman wants stability, to stay in one place and not move. She also wants security.

The third thing a woman wants is to be the ruler, not the owner. In India, ownership is not a problem because when a girl is married, she takes her inheritance with her in the form of gold, silver, diamonds and pearls. In the West this is called a dowry. We do not call it a dowry, we call it her inheritance, her right. According to recent law, every daughter has the right of inheritance to her parents' property, not just the jewels. If you want to sell some of your land, you cannot do so without your daughter's signature, because she is a partner in your property, even after her marriage.

As you cannot give her one acre of land because it is immovable, you give her gold, silver, pearls, diamonds and cows. Nowadays a car, television set, radio, washing machine and other things in vogue are given. A girl should not be sent out of the family with an empty suitcase. That is not the tradition in India. In India, even the poorest family spends with an open heart and open hands at the time of marriage. Everyone becomes generous.

Although in the West a lot has been spoken about the plight of women in India, the situation is not actually like that. Even a girl from a poor family leaves her parents with a full suitcase. Therefore, at Sita's wedding a dowry must be given in the form of jewellery, ornaments, beautiful saris and other necessary articles. This is not a marriage tax. A dowry is not given in that spirit. You spend so much money on your son and he becomes a vagabond. But what have you given your daughter? Therefore, we have to look after this community of women so that they will become good mothers and improve the quality of our future generations.





Sita - Rama

Sita was born in Mithila in the north of Bihar. Her father was King Janaka, a great jnani, a *videhamukta*, one who is liberated while living in the body. However, Sita was not really Janaka's daughter. A great famine had ravaged Mithila, and the people asked Janaka to intervene. It is the tradition in India that when a ruler becomes a farmer and concerns himself with agriculture, not just industries and corporate houses, then there will be no famine. So the people asked Janaka to plough the land and avert the famine. While he was ploughing the land, he found a newborn baby in a furrow. That was Sita.

The word *Sita* means 'furrow', 'ploughed land'. *Rama* means the indweller. Just as air, moisture and light are everywhere, so Rama dwells in all hearts. Sita is the one who can plough the land, who can remove the hard core of the ego. Nobody can change you unless you have a strong Sita element in your life as well as the element of Rama. That is the meaning of 'Sita-Rama'.

Sita was a miraculous child from birth. Janaka's family had a large bow, which belonged to Shiva. Not even the strongest of men could move it, but one day Sita picked it up effortlessly, and Janaka concluded that she was no ordinary girl and should be married only to one who could lift and string that bow. When she grew up, a *swayamvara*, a ceremony where a bride chooses her husband, was held, stringing the bow being the condition of marriage. Only Rama was successful in stringing the bow, and so Sita was married to Rama on the fifth day of Marga Shirsha.

This event took place in Treta yuga, millions of years ago. We believe that creation began billions of years ago, and mankind was born more than a billion



years ago. This is also endorsed by science. Hindus believe that creation has a cycle of four yugas: Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali. The approximate age of Kali Yuga is 432,000 years, of which five thousand-plus years have passed, so we have seen the initial period of Kali Yuga. Twice this is Dwapara Yuga, 864,000 years, twice that is Treta Yuga and twice that is Satya Yuga. This is one *chaturyuga*, a cycle of four ages.

Sita and Rama are part of the history of India, not mere symbols. History has a purpose because nature, prakriti, always has a purpose. Sita and Rama represent us, the position of our lives. What is happening in our life? What should happen in our life? What is the relationship between the self, the mind and the ego, between the body and the mind, between the body and everything else, earth, water, fire, ether? Where do we stand? All this is depicted in the legend of Rama.

Great scholars of both East and West have said that history is facts, and yet not quite. History has to become legend to avoid wars and hatred. If Lanka were to remember that Rama destroyed it, what would happen today? The war is not historical; it is now legendary. Legend is not myth; legend is the next form of history. The eighteen puranas are legends, not mythology.

Legend becomes folklore. Folklore is not myth, but the third incarnation of history. The story of Rama and Sita that we hear today is folklore. The songs we sing are folksongs. History becomes legend, legend becomes folklore and folklore lives and re-lives. You can destroy history, but not folklore. Therefore, it is important to celebrate the wedding of Sita and Rama. We are celebrating history, and history must be celebrated in a way that provides inspiration, enlightenment and inner awareness.

Mere remembrance of Sita-Rama takes us from outside to inside. When we say Sita-Rama, we attune with our own consciousness, our own self, rather than with the external



world. The marriage of Sita and Rama represents the union between prakriti, nature, and purusha, pure consciousness, the two eternal principles of creation. Rama represents the

cosmic being, absolute consciousness, and Sita represents mahashakti, cosmic energy. Everything that is born is a result of the union between purusha and prakriti.

Good Luck Kits

It is a tradition of this ashram that all the daughters-in-law of Rikhia panchayat are honoured on the day when Sita and Rama were married. We pay our regards to all those daughters-in-law who live here or who have come to this panchayat after their marriage, and we do not do this with empty hands. We present each of the new brides with a Good Luck kit. We offer a compact

suitcase containing all the items you offer your daughters when they depart for their in-laws' place. We give good luck kits not because we want to make the family rich, but to help nurture and sustain society for times to come.

On Vivaha Panchami, the day of the marriage of Sita with Rama, the newlywed girls in my community will be felicitated



with gold, silver, pearls, fine clothes, shoes, ornaments, perfumes, lipstick, hair oil, mirror, comb, soap, vermilion and all the other items comprising the *shringara*, the sixteen traditional items of beautification. This is a matter of joy for me and for their parents, because each kit costs about fifty thousand rupees, more if pure gold is included. The number of daughters-in-law varies from year to year; sometimes it is two hundred, sometimes three hundred and one year it swelled to six hundred.

I have always had intimate feelings for women, and Sita is a woman. She is a female and she is a lady. I do not say the marriage of Rama, I say the marriage of Sita. In India, in lower

class areas girls are given in marriage at an early age. I suggested that marriage should only take place when the girl is eighteen or twenty years of age, when she is more mature, and when the boy starts earning. Now the scene has changed, and very few young ones are being pushed into marriage.

After the customary visit to her husband's house, a newlywed girl remains in her father's home for a few years until she matures. At that time she is given a final farewell and sent to live in her husband's house. It is a special ceremony called *dwiragaman*. Until then she is married, but for all practical purposes she is not yet a wife.

At the time of *dwiragaman* I give gifts to the young brides of this area. Initially I gave these gifts to a few. Then more gifts came and now we are able to give to all the girls. To give such precious gifts to so many girls is no joke. One piece of jewellery compulsory for all married women in India is the mangalasutra. *Sutra* means 'thread' and *mangala* means 'auspicious'. It is the symbol of a married woman in India. The mangalasutra is made of gold and some are inlaid with diamonds, pearls and many precious stones. To give such gifts to five or ten girls is one thing, but when the number of girls went up to three hundred, I had to think about how to manage it.

The bright idea came - "Sita's marriage." By conducting Sita's marriage, we receive lots of prasad because in India a girl's marriage is the obsession of every family. The most important obligation of every parent is to see that their daughter is married at the right time, when she becomes a woman. We received so much that the ashram was full. We bought suitcases and packed them with wedding gifts. Whenever Swami Niranjana or

Swami Satsangi came to me, I would ask them, "Have you put the labels on the suitcases? Have you checked the jewellery? Is it real or artificial? Is the sari of good quality? Have you opened the sari? Is there any defect in it?"

I am as concerned about the whole affair as if all these girls were my own daughters or sisters. I organized Sita's

marriage to inspire the parents to give a few sets at least. Now we offer sets to all the girls who have come to my neighbourhood as daughters-in-law and those who are leaving to become daughters-in-law in other villages. This will be gifted, because to give and to give and to give is man's dharma.



Ideal Union

Sita's father, King Janaka, had decided that only the one who could lift and string Shiva's bow would wed Sita. Years later, when Sita was ready for marriage, kings, emperors, invincible conquerors and heroes were invited to her *swayamvara*, where a girl chose her husband. Many kings tried to lift the bow but without success. When the kings had been unable to break the bow, Janaka had become worried, and thought,

"If nobody can string the bow, my daughter will remain a virgin." To keep a virgin daughter at home has never been the custom in India. So Janaka was very worried and asked, "Are all the mighty people in the world dead?"

Sita was also greatly worried. When she met Rama for the first time in the garden, she saw this very handsome boy picking flowers for his guru, and perspiring. She was spellbound

because she recognized him at once, and said to herself, "Oh yes, this is my own darling, but my father has made this condition about the bow."

Guru Vishwamitra was present with Rama, and he ordered Rama to lift and string the bow. Rama lifted the bow, strung it and in the process broke it into two pieces.

Sita is Mahashakti, Adishakti, and Rama is the supreme God. The divine God and his maya have reincarnated as Sita and Rama. When God incarnates in the physical body, he is subject to the gunas of prakriti, to birth and death, sorrow and joy. Therefore, even though she is Adishakti, when Sita is born into maya, she is also subject to the three gunas, as is Rama.

Sita is worried because she really likes Rama. She thinks, "If Rama perspires when he is picking flowers, how will he be able to break the bow?" However, Rama was sweating because he was also worried. When Rama saw Sita, he also became completely hypnotized. He controlled himself, however, saying, "No, this is not right. I am a Raghuvanshi, the scion of a great race, I have a tradition, I have a heritage, I have a dharma. I belong to the dynasty of Raghu, the great king. How is Rama expected to behave? Sita is not my wife. I can look at her, but I can't go beyond that. I can't direct my passions, emotions and desires towards her." Afterwards, when the bow had been broken, Sita put the garland around Rama's neck.

This is a very straightforward story narrated by Tulsidas in simple language. Valmiki has narrated the story of Rama as the perfect man whereas Tulsidas has narrated the life of Rama as the incarnation of the absolute principle, *parabrahman*, *paramatma*.



Sita and Rama loved each other so very much in order to show us how we should live. The message sent by Rama to Sita through Hanuman touches the heart:

O my beloved,

The secret of our love is known to my mind only,

And that mind is always directed towards you.

Now only you can fathom the depth of our love.

After returning from Lanka, Hanuman describes the condition of Sita to Rama:

Your name was the guard, day and night,

And meditation on you was the shutter.

The eyes were fixed on your feet.

How could her prana leave the body?

In modern life, that ideal is changing. People say, "If he is a good husband, I will love him," or "If she is a good wife, I will love her, but if she is bad, I will divorce her." This is the trend, and the reason is that many husbands treat their wives badly. The husband should be like Rama to the wife and the wife should be like Sita to the husband. However, it does not happen because this is an ideal, and nobody applies it in their life. That is why the relationship between man and woman has not produced any positive result.

In tantra, it is clearly stated that the relationship between a man and a woman has three purposes: progeny, pleasure and samadhi. You have had the first and second experience, but how many have the third? The marital relationship is purely spiritual, and it has to be redefined and recodified. This relationship is not only for progeny or pleasure. Kundalini awakening can also take place. It has taken place in many tantric yogis, and tantric texts are the chronicles.



Sita-Rama Vivaha

The wedding day of Sita is called Vivaha Panchami in North India and Sita Kalyanam in South India. Rama and Sita were married at Janakpuri, in the north of Bihar, at the end of Treta Yuga. Their marriage is described in Ramacharitamanas.

“The endless ocean of love looks beautiful. The waves of this ocean swell up to see the full moon in the form of Sri Rama. The drums are beating in the skies and the heavenly dancers begin to dance. Brahma and the other gods and munishwaras are eulogizing and blessing Sri Prabhu Rama. Colourful flowers and garlands are being showered upon him from the skies. The kinnaras are singing melodies. The whole universe is rent with triumphal cheers in which the sound of the breaking of the bow sinks inaudibly. The people are overwhelmed with joy and spreading the grand news that Sri Rama has broken Shiva's bow.

“The court bards and minstrels are praising the Lord with an endless chain of compliments. People are making offerings of elephants, horses, wealth, coins, clothes and other riches. The mridanga, drums, conch, shehnai and all the auspicious musical instruments are playing sonorous music. Young damsels are singing in every nook and corner. The queen, along with her companions, becomes exceedingly happy. King Janaka gives up his anxiety and becomes joyful. All the contesting kings are outshone by Rama's victory, like the flame of a lamp is outdone by daylight.

“How can Sita's joy be described? She is like the chatak bird getting the sweet raindrops of the Swati nakshatra. Lakshman is eyeing Sri Rama like the baby chakor gazing at the full moon. Then Sita goes to Sri Rama. Her friends and companions accompany her, singing songs of joyous union. Sita is walking as gracefully as a royal swan. Her beauty is beyond description. She is holding the jayamala, garland of victory, glittering with the triumph of the universe. Although she feels boundless love for Sri Rama in her heart, her body is completely restrained and there is no overt expression of love for him.





"As she approaches her Lord, she is so spellbound by his divine beauty that she stands transfixed. Understanding her state of mind, her friends secretly nudge her to garland Sri Rama. She raises her hands to do so, but is too shy. Her hands look like the stems of lotus flowers being offered to the moon. Sita's friends once again burst into song and Sita manages to garland Sri Rama. As the garland is placed on Sri Rama, the gods begin to rain down flowers. All the kings in the court withdraw into themselves like the bud of a lotus shies away at the first rays of the sun in the morning.

"The whole of Janakpur, the earth and the sky, begin to reverberate with music. The wicked lose face and the good beam with happiness. The gods, kinnaras, humans, nagas and munishwaras charge the atmosphere with their shouts of applause, proclaiming Sri Rama's victory and their hearty blessings. The wives of the gods are showering flowers on the couple and singing. Everywhere resounds with the vedic chanting of the brahmins. The birds do not stop singing in praise of Prabhu Rama.

"The earth, heaven and netherworld are engulfed in the glory of Sri Rama's wondrous feat of breaking the bow and marrying Sita. The people of the town are waving lights, performing arati to Sri Rama and offering the couple the best of all that they have. Sri Rama and Sita are such a beautiful couple that it seems as if erotic romance and beauty are strung together. Sita's friends suggest that she touch Sri Rama's feet. She is overawed by his brilliance. Remembering the story of Ahalya, Rishi Gautam's wife, she hesitates. Sri Rama, aware of Sita's unparalleled love for him, smiles secretly in his heart."

Beauty is one of the most important attributes of God. Everyone should look as beautiful as possible on the day of Sita's marriage. God is *satyam, shivam, sundaram*, truth, auspiciousness and beauty. Marriage is one of the happiest occasions of life, when purusha meets prakriti, when God meets nature, when the unmanifest meets the manifest in order to propagate.

1999





Make Women Chandi

Women are the main asset in the Indian family. When a wife goes to live in her husband's home, she does not go empty-handed, but he goes to her house like a beggar to fetch her. It is she who manages all the expenses of the marriage. She comes as Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, and he keeps her there as his servant. The VIP who came to her husband's house and

filled it with wealth is today the maidservant. This is the biggest mistake of Indian society.

I have been a supporter of women and girls for many years. My ashram thrived because I trained females and gave them responsible posts. Women are very sincere. They have no ambitions except to become stable. A woman will try to become stable wherever she goes, whether it is at her in-laws, in an office or in an ashram. A stable person whose mind and body are focused is needed to manage any institution.

If men try to run the household, they will fail because they are not good managers. Let them try to look after the kitchen, the children, the cleaning and the maintenance, and everything will collapse. Therefore, in the coming age the women of India must become Mother India, and it is our duty to see that this happens. Leave aside old ideas that men and women become impure if they touch each other. The touch of a woman, whether mother, lover or wife, purifies and sanctifies a man. Similarly, the touch of a man makes a woman powerful. Both are important and have their place.



A woman is shakti, energy, power, but if a boy teases her on the road, she cannot defend herself. Girls should be allowed to grow strong and confident from early childhood and must not be kept under restraint. They should learn self-defence so they can protect themselves against intimidation. Girls are not weak and defenceless by nature. Men have made them that way in order to exploit them. If girls are encouraged to become strong, no one can exploit them.

When a husband has a strong wife, he cannot misbehave because she will never allow it. A woman must have such authority, power and rights that she can control her husband

and also keep a tight control over the keys. In the villages, the man gets drunk, goes home and beats up the wife, who brought money, clothing and household goods with her after marriage. This is a shameful act.

In India, a woman is the central pivot of the family. If she is inspired, her family will follow suit. If the woman of the family wakes up, the entire family awakens. If she sleeps, the entire family sleeps. It is the duty of men to pay as much attention to their daughters as to their sons. Women are one foot of society and men are the other. If one foot is strong and the other is weak, society will be lame. Tell me, isn't this a lame



society at the moment? Deoghar is the cremation ground of Sati. When his consort Sati died, Shiva, mad with grief, roamed around the world, carrying her body on his shoulders. During the journey various parts of Sati's body fell in different regions. Her heart fell in Deoghar, so it is the seat of Devi's heart. It is the cremation ground of Sati, not Shiva. It is also the birthplace of the new Devi. The message for the awakening of women will go out from here. Therefore, give a proper education to the women in your house, to your wives, daughters, mothers and sisters, and make them Chandi.

Duty to Women

I try to help and promote women. If saints and sages do not fulfil their duty towards women, then who will? We have a duty and an obligation towards the woman whose womb we have occupied for nine months. Yet we call a man whom we do not know our father and feel we owe him everything. We emerged into this world out of a woman's body, so why should we try to separate ourselves from her?

It is my right to respect, love and protect women, to give them everything I have to give. I will give whatever I can to women. I can give love, respect and equality. This is our dharma, duty and obligation because we are their children. A

woman's nature is always that of a mother. Whether a woman is your wife or daughter, her nature is that of a mother. The mother was also a woman once. My mother was also a woman and I am very thankful to her for producing me. The credit for creating my life goes to my mother, not to my father, because he was only a medium.

The strange thing is that all the legal and social rights belong to men, not to women. When the wife dies, the husband becomes a widower, but he faces no social restrictions. Yet when the wife becomes a widow, she must wear white clothing and remove all her jewellery. She becomes an outcast, is considered

inauspicious and cannot participate in religious activities. Such traditions are wrong, but people are unable to remove them because their mothers did not educate their minds. Mothers have only given kisses to their children, not education.

A child learns from the mother until the age of seven, and the knowledge imbibed is known as *samskara*. This inner, spiritual education stops at the age of seven. Thus the mother is the most important factor in the child's early life. After the age of seven, the child begins academic education in a school with a teacher. This is intellectual or worldly education. The education received in the form of *samskara* is completed by the seventh





year. Theology and psychology both accept this view and it is also the conclusion of the scriptures. Therefore, mothers should teach their children properly until the seventh year.

Women should learn to think differently. A woman should stop thinking like a servant. She is the master of the house and must think accordingly. Times are changing very rapidly. Today girls wear jeans, before that they wore mini skirts and before that full Victorian dress. In my village, the uneducated Santhali girls who work as labourers told Swami Satsangi, "We want to wear jeans because we have difficulty working in petticoats and saris." So we gave them all jeans and now the girls who work as labourers wear jeans and caps.

Years ago I realized that all the women in the world, including young girls, are my mothers. All women represent your mother, whether eastern or western, modern or traditional, young or old,

companion or secretary, urban dweller or villager. Whatever I am doing is in repayment of the debt I owe to a woman. A sannyasin owes his mother the biggest debt. Adi Shankaracharya had to discontinue his world-conquering tour to discharge his duty to his mother by performing her last rites when she died.

All other debts can be written off except that owed to one's mother. A woman comes into your life as a mother or as a daughter. The strongest manifestation of God in this world is the woman as mother. She is the best of His beauty, the best representation of His benediction and grace. Therefore, as a sannyasin I am freeing myself from the debt to my mother.

In India, women have been exploited, ill-treated, dishonoured and weakened. If a sannyasin does not support the woman deprived of everything, who else will? This is of primary importance to the spiritual aspect of woman as the

Mother. People say that sadhus and sannyasins should have nothing to do with the female sex, that they should not even talk to women. I say, "Why not?" The race, the tradition, the people who do nothing to uplift their downtrodden womenfolk can never rise. No society can progress without paying their dues to women. India will never enjoy prosperity until it makes its womenfolk great and learned and able to stand on their own two feet.

Woman is a precious gem, yet such a valuable and worthy part of society is reduced to a nonentity. So many women cannot go to school or mix freely in society. This is their helpless state, especially in villages. Therefore, I have started helping women and girls by giving them bicycles so they can travel independently and safely. With God's grace I will continue to do so. Each girl will be the symbol of my mother.

Women and Spiritual Life

In ancient India, in the vedic culture, women were in the forefront of society. Later, however, India became prey to foreign invasions, cultures, ideas, races and philosophies, and as these influences became politically powerful, they imposed their own systems on society. As a result women were segregated and forced to recede into the background.

Vedic culture was different. Degradation of women is alien to us. Women had a prime place in society. In early vedic times India was totally matriarchal, and the child was named after the

mother. In Indian society the son always carries the mother's name, for example, Kaushalyanandan, the son of Kaushalya, Devakinandan, the son of Devaki. The woman's name comes first, as in Sita-Rama, not Rama-Sita, Radhe-Shyam, not Shyam-Radhe. All the systems were named after women. Vedic culture talks of *matrivansha*, maternal lineage, not *pitrivansha*, paternal lineage; it talks of *matribhoomi*, motherland, not *pitribhoomi*, fatherland.

In vedic culture, women used to sit in parliament. Women used to receive the sacred thread, yajnopavit, practise the Gayatri

mantra and perform daily vedic worship. Nowhere in the scriptures is it written that a female cannot wear the sacred thread or conduct pooja and other rituals. Yet female priests are not found in the temples. This restriction is due to the Muslim and Christian influence on our culture. In Islam and Christianity you do not find female priests. Only recently has some provision been made for female clergy in the church, and it aroused opposition. People said it is written in the Bible that women should not conduct church rituals, but this is absolutely wrong.





Women should learn pooja and chanting of the Sanskrit stotras and perform these rituals in their homes. In Maharashtra, near Shirdi, a saint named Upasani Maharaj had girls living in his ashram, and they were taught vedic rituals and chanting of the Vedas. Women are certainly qualified to learn the correct method of performing pooja. If they women perform these rituals at home as well as in

temples and sacred places, society will benefit and the social atmosphere will improve. The village women have maintained the old traditions, otherwise they would have been lost. They know how to run the family well and how to lead harmonious and healthy lives. They remember the entire yearly calendar of events, and know when Panchami, Chhat or Teej are due, but educated people have to ask a priest.

Women are discriminating and have much more forbearance and fortitude than men. Men often let go of their principles, but women have more restraint. Women also have a greater capacity to bear pain and endure hardship. Imagine if a man had to give birth to a child! These precious qualities should be carefully preserved.

Women also qualify for sannyasa as well as householder life. Both qualities are inherent in women. Not all men qualify for sannyasa, but most women do. Women have a natural inclination for spiritual life, and their physical, mental and emotional make-up enables them to have greater success. It is natural for women to imbibe the truth of spiritual life. Women can manage without a teacher or a guru because by nature they are close to God. Unfortunately, however, they have been barred from churches and mosques, but in India the doors of spiritual life are open to women.

In the 15th century, Mirabai, and later many other great women, renounced and came to the spiritual path. They took to the path of bhakti. In our age there are many outstanding women like Anandamayi Ma, the Mother of Pondicherry and Swami Kankarashwarananda. In India, we welcome them with open hearts. We don't have the feeling that 'she' is a female and 'I' am a male. A woman can be a natural guru. Our scriptures say that the mother is the first guru – *Mata prathama guru*. When the mother is the first teacher, it is accepted that she has the quality of a guru. It is inherent in her. You can't make someone a guru.

So, while women are absolutely qualified to marry, to produce children and to look after a home, they are also qualified to take sannyasa. I have always had this perception in mind. A time has to come when religions recognize the role of women in the progress and evolution of spiritual life.

Women's Role in Society

A woman is the way to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. After marriage, she brings wealth and assets, an income from her job and she maintains the home economy by saving money. Therefore, educated women should not be limited to the kitchen. Many women in the villages maintain the home as well as work in the fields. That is self-employment, but it is not taken into account in the nation's economy. It doesn't appear in the statistics because anyone can pick up the cow dung or milk the cow, but not everyone can earn a monthly salary. If educated women sit at home and spend all their time in the kitchen, it does not make sense. Women should remember that wherever they work, their job not only earns money, but also brings them into contact with society. Social interaction is a very important aspect of growth.

Times are not so bad, virtue still rules the world, but a village girl will not dare to travel to Deoghar, a few kilometres away, by bicycle at night. In Bombay, girls travel day and night because they have done so from an early age and know that nothing untoward will happen. Fear arises only when one is not aware of the real circumstances due to lack of social exposure. Our society is not as bad as people imagine it to be, and it is not necessary to keep women trapped within four walls. It may not be an ideal society, but the restrictions imposed upon women are inappropriate for the times.

If women start up enterprises or businesses, their minds will be engaged and they will be happy and satisfied. Why should they miss out on the opportunities being offered in society today? Women may sit at home, weave carpets, stitch clothes and sell them, but by employing themselves in this way they do not enter into social life. By restricting their social exposure, they will not be able to control the destiny of society.





Each individual decides the direction of society. Only through social interaction can women exercise control in relation to whether laws about education, marriage, crime, kidnapping and rape are made in favour of women or men. Only then will this become a vigorous, assertive society.

Whether it is a society of poor, backward classes or of rich, educated classes, it is not enough to merely be an active society. It should be an assertive society as well. If there is an upheaval elsewhere in India, the entire government is shaken. However, if anything happens in Deoghar, the government is not bothered, because the people here are not assertive or strong, and cannot fight for their rights. Only an assertive society can obtain its rights. Rights are not given in charity, rights have to be seized.

Throughout the world people have fought for their rights. In all the developed countries women have claimed their rights. Previously, in the West women had the same social restrictions as in India, but now they have seized their legal, political, professional and social rights, even the right to change the marital laws. In India today the laws are made by men with men in view. Laws are not made for women because men do not understand women's problems and circumstances. Therefore, every woman must know how to seize her rights.

When it comes to solving their problems, making laws for their benefit and obtaining their rights, women have no social exposure or experience. If uneducated women march in a procession to ask for their rights, they won't get anywhere. To obtain your rights, you must deserve them, and those qualities are developed by social interaction. Social interaction means mixing with men and moving



around. Only then will you find out that there are good as well as bad people in society. In any big city, day and night, women mix and move about, travel to work and elsewhere. In the villages this is not done, so the women feel insecure. As a result they are backward, and a backward class has backward thinking. The economic and political situation is also backward because people are afraid.

Since I came to Rikhia, the percentage of girls attending schools has increased. They see the female sannyasins driving

cars, trucks and tractors, supervising construction work and going to the market full of confidence and courage. So they have imbibed the desire to learn and to become something. I have only one principle. As long as the machine is functioning at an optimal level, the product will be of a high quality. These young girls are the manufacturing machines of the future. Males are only the operators. Therefore, we must educate, encourage and inspire girls to create a strong, vigorous, assertive community, not a passive one.

Equal Opportunities

We have to atone for all the oppression heaped upon girls and women in the past. Women have been tortured and are being humiliated even today in India. Their rights and privileges have been snatched away and many degrading rules imposed on them. All the facilities and privileges centre around men. Women encounter restrictions everywhere. Some sections of society still discriminate against widows, but widowers face no such discrimination. Indians have to atone for the heartless acts and atrocities committed on women. It is an obligation we have to fulfil.

We do not discriminate between male and female workers in the ashram. In the past, the daily rate was higher for men than women because it was the practice prevalent in this area. I said, "Women work harder than men and their output is greater so why should we pay women less?" Thereafter men and women have been paid equally in this ashram. I do not discriminate. The truth is that men and women must have equal rights. The civil and social laws should not be discriminatory and different.

I tell the village girls they must study hard and become properly educated. In the past girls had only one future, which was to get married and produce children. Now they have a future on many fronts. They can study, acquire knowledge and obtain a university degree, become engineers, scientists, learn computer technology and electronics, biotechnology, and so on. They can hold a job in a bank, in schools and colleges, become doctors or lawyers, accountants or police superintendents. After they have done that, then they can marry.

There is no harm in marrying, but today marriage is not the only future for a girl. A hundred years ago marriage might have been the only option, but now a girl's future lies in higher education. Marriage and children should be the last



option, never the first priority. A girl's marriage is decided by her parents, but the choice should be hers. How can it be her marriage and your choice? In the next ten or fifteen years times will change and girls will be bold enough to say, "If the boy you have selected for me is so virtuous and accomplished, why don't you marry him? I will marry the boy of my choice. I earn a good salary, so the boy's parents should not demand a dowry."

Those who demand a dowry from the parents of a girl who is fully employed are downright fools.

Today it is possible for women to come out, to be educated, to become lawyers, judges, doctors and nurses. It is possible for women to maintain their dignity and at the same time take an active part in building the nation. In India, those who are convinced of this are allowing their female children out, and



this is certainly a good sign. Keeping women at home is a misuse of capital. Women are extremely powerful in a society with western dimensions. They have first class brains and the qualities of compassion, affection and endurance. After marriage they go to a stranger's house and make it their own. Is that an ordinary quality? A man who lives in his wife's parental home suffers from a sense of inferiority, but women can go

to their in-laws and remain superior. Women have the basic ability to adjust.

Women have *viveka*, the ability to discriminate between right and wrong. If a man had to go out to work and also keep house and take care of the children, he would go insane. But women go to work, give birth to children, feed them, keep house, go marketing and do many other things as well. It is



important that we give special respect and recognition to the women in our homes. We must change our attitude towards women completely, provide them with the same opportunities as men and encourage them to pursue alternatives. We must have greater faith in their purity and willpower. Women have *sankalpa shakti*, willpower. Once they decide something, they do it.

In past ages, due to foreign cultural influences, restrictions were imposed on women in India and they were segregated from men. As a result women in our society have not been able to uplift themselves. The mistake is ours as well as theirs. Women cannot break out of the mould and the limitations imposed on them by society. If you want to make progress, you have to keep in mind the reasons why society is moving in the wrong direction.



Mother and Child

The mother is the most important person in a child's upbringing. In Asia, in particular, a child is always with the mother because the father goes out to work. Most Indian children sleep with their mother at least until the age of seven. Whatever problems they have at school, with their friends or in their personal life, they

take to their mother, not their father. If a child fails his exams, he will tell his mother, not his father. A child seldom lies to his mother, but tells clear lies to his father.

A child only needs a mother, but a mother needs a man for personal reasons, to earn a living, for security and social status. Otherwise she does not need a father for her child. It is enough to tell a child that he has a father. Many children

grow up without knowing their father and they are intelligent, balanced and secure. Fathers must be aware that their main role is to earn money and feed the family.

The mother is the basis of faith. If you have no faith in your own mother, you are robbed of faith in life. It does not matter what kind of a mother you have. Her appearance, nature, intelligence, qualities, education and talents are all irrelevant



as far as faith is concerned. A mother is a mother, however imperfect she may be.

The mother nurses the child's genetic personality or genetic seed until seven years of age. That is the child's first education, learning at the level of samskara. After the age of seven, formal education begins in a school or gurukul, and the intellect is developed. During the first seven years, therefore, it is better for a child to live with the mother. Modern psychology also says that a child's real education is over at seven. The natural computer stops and training related to the human personality comes to an end. Therefore, for the child a father is more of a hindrance than a help. He may be necessary for the mother,

but the mother is necessary for the child. This is my ultimate conclusion.

Today there is social breakdown because mothers are totally out of gear. They get angry and beat their children. Women are not able to handle the family because they have learned nothing useful at school, only historical facts. After marriage, women are expected to stay in the kitchen. A mother's role is very important, and her needs are not met by the education system. She should be accomplished, cultured and well informed. A mother has to have all the qualities of a guru or teacher. As real education is completed at the age of seven, it is said that the mother always remains a part of the child's psyche. Father and



child did not stay together constantly, and so the mother was given the status of first guru. Today, unfortunately, mothers who qualify for the status of guru do not exist, but this will change in the future.

Day and night we say, "Educate the girls more than the boys." We are pressing this point in order to give more importance, more rights and more freedom to girls. Then the next generation will automatically be educated. However, a father always prefers to educate the boys and neglects the girls, thinking, "When she marries, she will go to someone else's house, so why should I waste my resources on her?" The father does not think ahead, but the mother does.

2000



Only God helps the Poor

Sat Chandi Mahayajna is conducted for two purposes. Firstly, I wish to give the villagers, who are my neighbours, the opportunity of taking part in such a ceremony. Secondly, only the Divine Mother will help the downtrodden. These poor people elect the government, but the government forgets them. Not even the most basic amenities are provided. I know because I live here. I am the witness. Only the force of God can help those who are helpless and neglected, and it is with this hope that I have organized the Sat Chandi Mahayajna.

*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah,
Sarve santu niramaya,
Sarve bhadrani pashyantu,
Maa kashchit dukha bhagbhavet.*

May God make them prosperous,
May God make them free from disease,
May God remove all the sickness and ills of their family,
And let them enjoy bliss, peace, happiness and health.

This is my sankalpa. Until the villagers receive the grace of the Divine Mother, their sorrows will not be removed.

I came to Rikhia in September 1989. On January 14, 1990, I made a sankalpa to repeat my mantra 10,800,000 times. It took me three hundred days. Towards the end I heard God tell me, "Love thy neighbour." He said, "Just as I have given you the comforts of life, so will you give the same to your neighbours. I have given you a place to live and food to eat, so you will do the same for your neighbours." This was a clear mandate.

Since that time the people of this area have received a great deal of inspiration, help and encouragement. More than anything, they have received an identity. Rikhia, the name of their village, is now on the world map. I welcome you all to the yajna on behalf of the lowly and humble people of Rikhia.



My Neighbours

When I came to Rikhia in 1989, it was a desolate place. The people living in my neighbourhood had no hope for the future. Now the area is humming with life, and the conditions have improved remarkably. Rikhia is the tribal area of the Santhalis. This state was once called Santhal Parganas. The Santhalis are the indigenous tribe, the original residents, and live here today. They have a great culture, greater than ours.

The Santhalis are my neighbours. They are good people who suffer from ignorance, illiteracy, helplessness and disease. They are poor but loving; they have big hearts and small bank balances. I know the villagers for eight to ten kilometres around me, and they do everything for me. My neighbours have been

associated with the Akhara since its inception, and over the years they have worked ceaselessly to construct the ashram.

We utilize the services of the local people for digging excavations, installing pipes, brick laying, electrical fittings, welding, plumbing, carpentry and many other types of work. They maintain and service the vehicles, tractors, truck, cycles and motor cycles, even the UPS. We do not hire artisans or mechanics from the cities. Everything from painting to electrical work is taken care of by local artisans.

When we started construction, the Santhalis cleaned up the entire area before building began and plastered it with mud and cow dung. They are adept at using indigenous

materials, and have very good technology. We call the masons *vishwakarmas*, divine architects, because they have given us so much assistance in constructing the ashram. The local people also look after the horticulture and gardening, and all live within a radius of a few kilometres from the ashram. The Santhalis are intelligent and skilled, honest and hardworking, but very independent. They do not pilfer or shirk work. Because of their character the quality of their work is superior, neat and clean. We never have to worry whether or not they will turn up when required. That is why we hold them in high esteem.

I am aware of the problems my neighbours face in their day-to-day lives. Until I was nineteen I lived as a farmer's son in



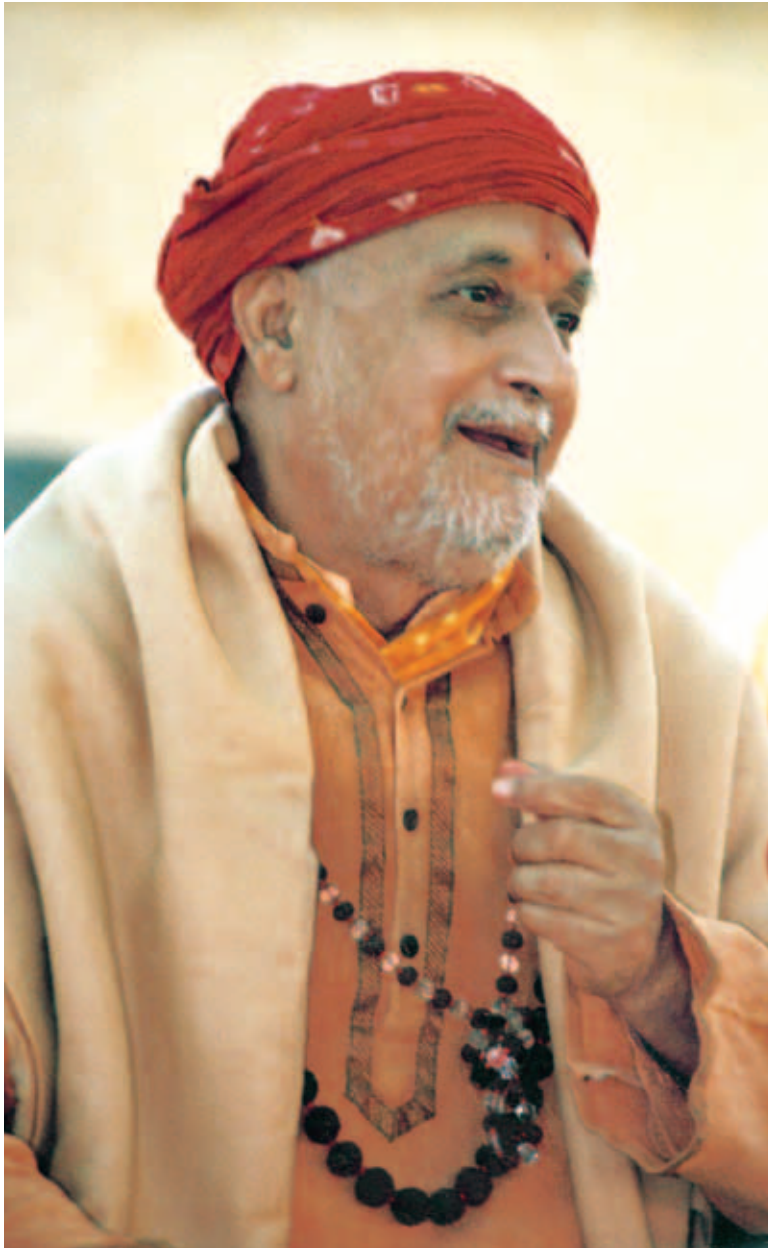
my village home. Then I spent twelve years in my guru's ashram where I led a much harder life without rest or comfort. After leaving Rishikesh I spent some years as a wandering sannyasin, including some time in Varanasi where I followed the routine of the beggars. In 1989, the people of Rikhia panchayat were living like orphans, totally ignored by the government. Many villagers around us had nothing to eat. Only when Swami Satsangi started visiting the nearby homes did we become aware of their pitiable living conditions. I thought, "My God, how do they live and survive?" She used to send rice, pulse, oil and condiments to such houses and people started arriving at her door.

My arrival has made a substantial change in their destiny. Almost one hundred percent of the children now go to school.

We provide the older girls with bicycles so they can travel to the town for higher education. I have suggested that the widows wear clothes similar to normal married women and have offered them such clothes to wear.

We have established a relationship with these rural people. When I go for a stroll to the villages, the people watch out for me and the children say good morning. If they miss seeing me, the children start shouting at their parents, "Mummy, Papa, Swamiji has gone past." It is not because I give them anything. Love is reciprocal. When you give love, you receive the same amount of love in return. If I ignore you, you are bound to ignore me too.





Rural India

The humble people of the Indian rural community live in balance with nature. They do not disturb or exploit nature for their own sustenance, greed or sensuality, but live with nature. Any community that lives with nature follows a divine path. Nature is not created by divinity, but is a part of divinity. There is silence and simplicity in the lives of those who live with nature.

The poverty that the villagers live in is not self-imposed but a result of their situation. Poverty may

be negative for the greedy, the exploiters and cheats, but for those who are seeking spiritual life, poverty is not a negative state. If you want to experience spirituality, live like a poor person even if you are not poor. Reduce your wants, limit your needs and restrict your temptations. Religions have been saying this for many millennia.

The rural community of Rikhia is very poor. Blessed are the poor! The poor are always meek. Poor people cannot be arrogant. If they do, they will be kicked by the rich. The poor do not have a chance. The only way for them is to





be meek. It has been said in the Bible, "The meek shall inherit the earth." Blessed are the meek.

I feel in harmony with the people living around me. There is nothing superficial in their behaviour or dress. They do not eat synthetic food or wear synthetic clothes, nor do they have synthetic love. Everything about them is natural. If I did not get food from the ashram, the villagers would provide it. But they are very poor. I have seen poverty before, but never so close.

There was a boy of twelve years who could not walk straight. His parents said he was going blind. I found out that he had cataracts. His parents did not know because they did not have the means to go to a doctor, even in Deoghar, ten kilometres away. This disease is curable. We sent him to a doctor who implanted a lens in his eye, and now the boy can see. Wherever there are limitations, that is poverty.

The villagers lack so many basic facilities. They do not even have the facilities for quick insemination of their cows at the right time. This is a big loss for a villager, and it happens time and time again. In the cities we spend millions of rupees in a night, but we neglect the basic foundation of Indian culture. The Indian tradition continues with the poorest of the poor. They will not deviate from their tradition, even if they have to borrow money or sell their jewellery. The marriage ceremony has to be completed in the traditional way, and any festivity is to be performed according to established custom. If this culture disappears due to poverty, then it is meaningless whether India remains united or otherwise.

Dharma is no longer the foundation of the nation. In today's context, the nation is the foundation for dharma. The foundation of the nation is the *sanskriti*, the culture which you see among the poor people here. Some of you



may not have lived in a village. To you my advice is to live in one for some time to experience that life and see the skills the villagers use for survival. It is the survival of the fittest.

Village culture is an independent culture. In autumn, when the trees lose their leaves, the women collect the dry leaves early in the morning and stack them in their houses. They don't go to the market to purchase firewood or gas cylinders. You may not be aware of how independent they are. They use the dry leaves as firewood and cook their daily food in a small cooking pot. Their needs are few. It makes no difference to them whether there is a government or not. They draw water for cooking and drinking purposes from the village tank. They go to the fields to relieve themselves and their ablutions are finished by sunrise. Thus they lead a spartan life independent of external aids.

This kind of culture is not dependent on a king, on wealth or on any external resources. To inculcate this kind of culture sannyasins are given similar training in the guru's ashram. Self-imposed poverty is a way of life independent of the external world. Even if you are a millionaire or a multimillionaire, try to skip a meal one day a week. If you go to a pilgrimage centre, lie down on the bare earth for a day. One should try to be independent. When I meet the villagers, I often say, "With a push cart you are independent. You can earn sixty rupees a day and live an honest life. You need not earn six hundred rupees a day and be dishonest!"

Agricultural Society

The best form of society is a prosperous agricultural one. It is a sustainable society whereas an industrial society is not. In the long term, industrial fallout will be very harmful to the environment and to people's health. Governments everywhere should promote agricultural rural societies, not neglect them. Agriculture must be given prime importance throughout the world.

We have started an agricultural movement in Rikhia called Sivananda Sarovar. We have planted medicinal herbs for most of the common ailments like coughs and colds, stomach aches, itching and weakness. Many remedies can be prepared from ginger, onion, garlic and various types of leaves. The leaves, bark, roots, flowers and fruits all have great medicinal value. Since we are all now dependent on ready-made medicines, we have forgotten practically everything about home remedies and cannot even identify the most common medicinal plants which may be growing in our own garden or in the garden next door.

We must encourage rural people to revive their herbal knowledge so that they can grow medicinal herbs and market them. People send us seeds from all parts of the world. Vegetables are marketable and we can grow all types of vegetables. We have created a small nursery and supplied thousands of trees to the local people. We also supply organic seeds to the local farmers, which can be grown with natural fertilizers, so chemical pesticides are not needed. Agriculture is a versatile culture because it provides food as well as medicine.





Emancipation of the Villages

The real emancipation of India will happen only with the emancipation of the villages. In this part of the country, public welfare activities and plans for development have not been extended to the villages at all, but restricted to big cities. The cities have good buildings, schools, colleges, hospitals and nursing homes. Good quality roads, bridges, parks and hotels are constructed, but the villages have nothing. Politicians have not forced the government to reach out to the villages. Reaching out means that no one in a village dies hungry.

Primary health care is also neglected. Proper drinking water facilities are not provided and people get jaundice from infected water. The women and children have not yet understood that education is for their benefit. In other parts of the country, the rays of progress have touched each and every village and people have adequate facilities to live decent lives. The basic commodities of water, seeds and fertilizer have been provided as well as moral encouragement.





Farmers are a struggling community. Five acres of land requires the same infrastructure as fifteen, whether it is an irrigation pump, a tractor, or a plough and bullocks. Farmers living in the villages are very poor and their biggest need is not land, but facilities. The government has given them land, but agriculture needs water, seeds and a plough. Government support was given to the production of coal and steel, but the same support was not given to agriculture. The farmers, who are the backbone of our society, have been deprived. I see this all around me. As long as the leaders ignore the basic needs of the poor villagers, their leadership will have no positive or permanent consequences and this part of the country will remain backward.

In India, the village is most important. Most of the poverty is in the villages. Public utilities are concentrated in the cities, so the villagers migrate there. In the cities there are schools and colleges, electricity, transport, roads and telephones, but there is nothing in the villages. If a villager is posted to the town, he takes his family and children and the village is left behind. All those who are weak, crippled and devoid of quality are left behind. Educated, capable, prosperous people like us have left the villages. Without an active community in the villages, no facilities or resources are available. What can be done to raise the standard of living so that we can live there once again?

People will return to the villages only when there are facilities for education and health care. This can only happen when educated people undertake social service in the villages and use their

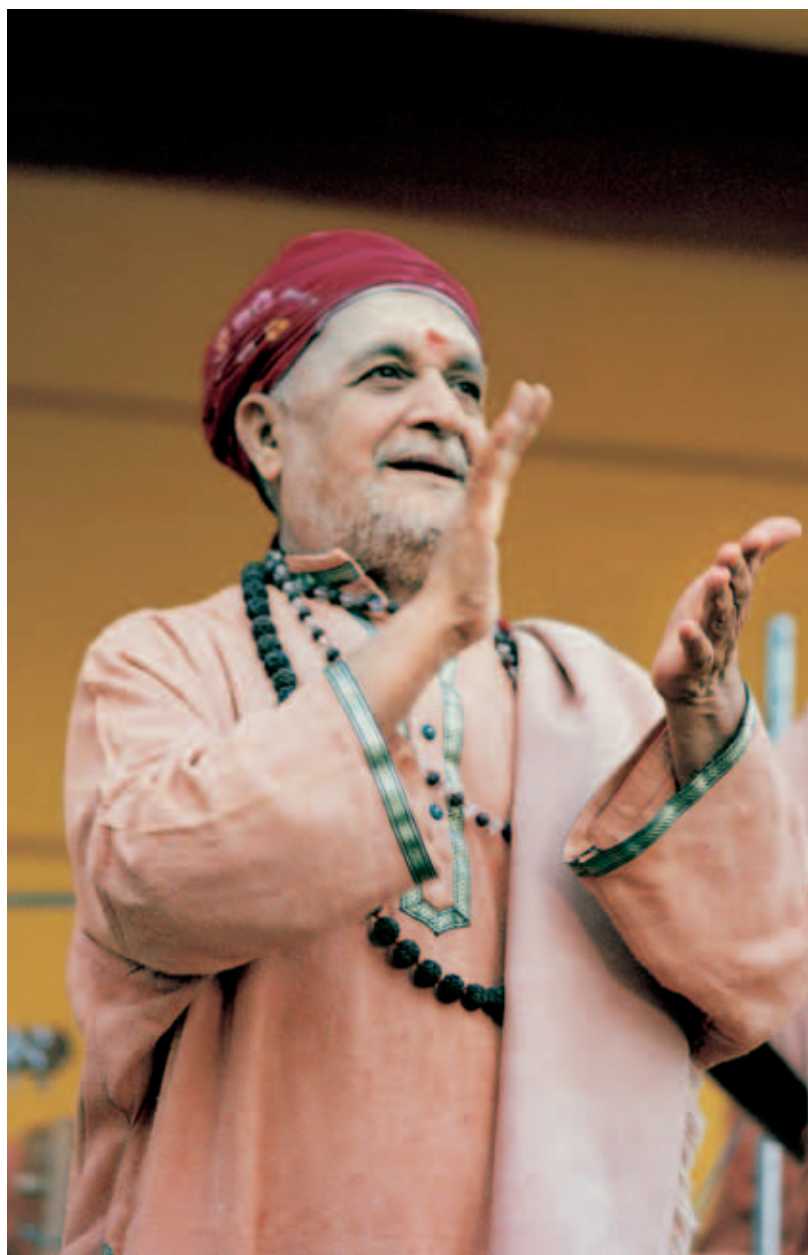


resources to provide low cost housing, facilities for drinking water and irrigation, self-employment opportunities for both men and women, and so on. When a good school opens in the village, children will not need to go to the town. If there is a health centre in the village, no one will need to go to the big cities for treatment. If there is a good barber, a good carpenter, a textile shop and a few other small shops in the village, no one will go to the cities.

Our duty is to share our extra wealth with the poor. Assisting the villages will improve the situation in the cities, because the poor in the cities are migrants from the villages. If the situation in the villages improves, migration to the cities will decrease, which would mean less petty crime in the cities. What we need is ruralization, and what is happening is urbanization.

The atmosphere and social structure of a city are totally different to that of a village. The needs of a village are basically those of a farmer. A labourer has no special needs, he can go from place to place, but how can a farmer leave his land? Villages





all over the world are like pregnant women, while the cities and towns are like barren women. If rapid urbanization is curtailed, crime, poverty, filth and slums can be eradicated. In order to achieve this, help must reach the villages.

When I came to Rikhia, I led an austere life. I had always been an affluent sannyasin, but in the midst of all those comforts I always wondered whether it was the ideal life. The village people are simple and innocent. Many do not even have a hut to live in. There is no light in their house, not even a broken bed to sleep on. They have nothing. They die of starvation, but nobody helps them.

The life of a sannyasin is dedicated to the upliftment of the world. Just as I spread yoga throughout the world, I will provide every house with a water supply, fields to till and the necessities of life. We will do everything for Rikhia panchayat without depending upon the government. I shall see that this happens. "Green Rikhia, prosperous Rikhia" is my promise and my pledge to you.



Serving the Poor

The poor people of the world are a challenge to your spiritual life. Whether in Asia, Africa or elsewhere, people are suffering mentally, physically and economically. Ten percent of your income should be spent on God's creation. This is the purpose of spiritual life, otherwise do not talk about God. Whatever you spend on your own enjoyment and luxuries for three days a month should go to the poor.

If you want success in spiritual life, find a way to serve the poor. Have you ever given a thought to reforming society by serving the underprivileged? It is not wrong to do pooja or to read the Ramayana, Bible or Koran. It is not wrong to visit a church, mosque or temple. It is not wrong to seek satsang with saints and sannyasins, but the most important way to worship God is to see Him in His creation. God is present everywhere. Think this over carefully.

The world family starts from your own village, from the people in your immediate neighbourhood. Don't talk about Vedanta as long as their misery, shocking condition and abject poverty does not touch a chord in your heart, as long as their suffering does not become part of your suffering, their hunger pangs your pangs. Thinking of others as you think of yourself is *atmabhava*, including everybody within your own heart.

Forty percent of people in Indian villages do not eat every day. Go and see for yourself. The children go to sleep hungry. I have seen it, I know. Many of you also know. Shouldn't you give it some thought? Have this much compassion and kindness in your heart. You cannot say that the whole world is your soul, while at the same time a brother or sister is lying sick, hungry and unhappy.

The villagers in my local area are very simple at heart, and also very poor. People bring blankets, clothes, toys, books





and many other items which we distribute to the villagers in Rikhia panchayat. It is the only interaction that interests me. If we can share what we have with the village people, there will be a friendly relationship between us. This creates a positive environment. When people bring items for distribution, it also helps their dharma and karma. Doing pooja is not the only way to work out your karma. Sharing the joys and sorrows of others is also necessary.

The village people have no alternative but to live in deprivation. Illiteracy is the biggest problem. Many villagers are blind, disabled or widowed, and need help. Instead of retiring at the age of fifty-five or sixty, think about taking voluntary retirement at the age of fifty and running a social service

institution along with ten to fifteen other people. Don't make the plan on paper only. Implement it and keep it active in the villages, not in the cities. There are many facilities in towns and cities, but none in the villages.

Self-employment and shelter are most important. Rickshaws and handcarts enable the men to be self-sufficient and feed their families. Sewing machines enable the women, particularly the widows, to make articles and sell them. Villagers have different housing needs to townsfolk. Space for cattle, fodder and firewood, a kitchen and a separate sleeping area for the older family members are necessary. The system of mud brick construction is very economical and houses can be constructed quite easily. Thinking about others, especially the

deprived, should be part of our life, abilities and resources. Our industries should spare a part of their profits for those sections of society we call the have-nots.

In order to develop a different attitude, think, "I have three children of my own, but there is a needy orphan who is intelligent and deserving yet has no money for school fees. He is also my child." People pay lip service and claim the whole world is their family, while here I am trying to provide enough clothing just for the small population of Rikhia panchayat, whom I consider my family. I am talking about a very practical reality. Even if I cannot cater for all their needs, I can call the whole world my family. However, merely talking about it does not make the world my family. Practical steps must be taken.



Load Bearers of Society

The villagers are the load bearers of our society. In a building, the columns, beams and foundations bear the load, not the windows, furniture or decorations. People like us are the interior decoration. The common folk in our country, the labourers, rickshaw pullers and thela pullers, are the load bearers. Once they croak, society will break and there will be chaos. Therefore, it is most important that we recognize their role in society and accept their existence as a reality.

It becomes the duty of everyone to sustain this society, otherwise it will collapse. Society does not depend on people like us. We are a burden on society. Therefore, it is our duty to care for the common folk. Their needs are very few. The oxygen, food and water they consume in one year, an American or European consumes in one second, so you can understand how economical they are for our existence.

In every society the supports are the cultivators and labourers. When society breaks, anarchy takes place. If we are destroyed, nothing will happen, but if their society is destroyed, the country will suffer. In every age, the needs of society have changed. During the last one hundred and fifty years, the prevalence of big industries has destroyed the rural economy in which smaller artisans survived.

The general populace, not the rulers, are the cornerstone of the nation. The masses provide the base, the solid ground, the direction for a nation to move forward. The rulers are just our representatives, our servants, not our masters. It is the nation builders that constitute society. The media highlight the activities of intellectuals and their ideologies so that it appears they constitute the core of society, but they do not represent the philosophy of the masses.

The national philosophy of India will be determined by the sixty percent of the population living in villages. We all belong to that class. There was a time when our forefathers used to live in thatched huts and draw water from wells. You have forgotten





because you have stepped into a different culture. Don't forget that this is an artificial culture, a temporary phase. Real culture is independent and long lasting.

Every year, on September 8, Swami Sivananda's birthday, I help one person start a small enterprise. It only takes a few thousand rupees to start a small village shop and stock it with things people use like biscuits, detergent, pencils and notebooks. The shopkeeper purchases from the town for the village. We purchase from the nearby shop, and the shopkeeper earns five or ten percent. If every Indian with means made a few compromises in their luxury expenditure and decided to make one family self-sufficient, we could solve the social problems of India, which the government has been unable to do.

Bhartrihari has said: "Giving, enjoyment and destruction are the three channels of wealth. To the one who neither gives nor enjoys, the third will inevitably happen." So, please



do not misunderstand me when I call upon you to take care of the society in which you live and prosper. My philosophy is simple and straight. It has been repeated by our spiritual leaders from time immemorial. Everyone should ponder over the plight of that section of society which has been neglected for so long. How long can you sit in your air-conditioned room when there is fire raging outside? Eventually the fire will engulf you too.

Nobody objects to your enjoying life, but don't ignore your less fortunate brothers and sisters, because their numbers are increasing. In many countries twenty to forty percent of the population is living below the poverty line. If their number increases due to our neglect, the well off will be in the minority. There will be social anarchy, political upheaval and cultural devastation. History is the witness. Revolution takes place in any society where the poor are in the majority. So, be careful.

2001



The Kanyas and Batuks of Rikhia

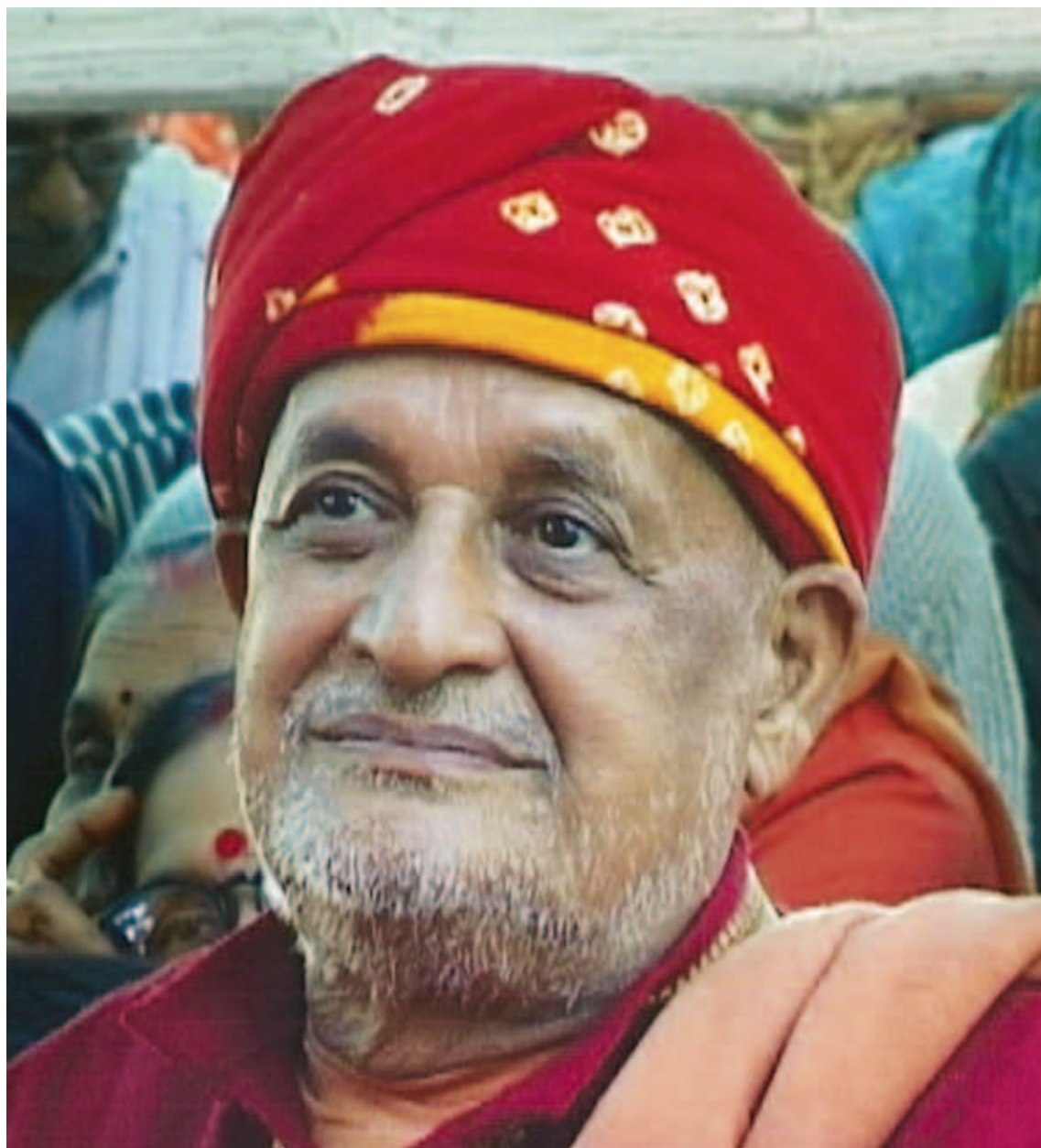
At Rikhiapeeth, we have adopted 1,500 young boys and girls, *kanyas* and *batuks*. These children from the surrounding villages are down-to-earth, practical and very intelligent. They have no concept of fatigue or exhaustion. Many of their fathers work in the towns, so the mothers and grandmothers care for the children. The children say the ashram is their first home and all day long they swarm around like bees. Every day they come for classes in English, yoga, kirtan, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana and computer skills. The older ones have started teaching the younger ones. When the children reach the age of thirteen, they retire to make way for more children.

When I first arrived in Rikhia, neither the children nor their parents showed any interest in their studies. I was surprised because my feeling was that if the sannyasins in the ashram are so highly educated, then householders and their children should also be knowledgeable. Classes start from Makar Sankranti, mid-January, every year, and continue till Navaratri in October. People from India and all around the world stay in the ashram and teach these young children, who have developed a great interest in their education.

Most of the children are from the families of labourers. People ask what is the point of village girls learning computer skills if their future is only to get married and collect cow-dung every morning. My reply is that even educated people can collect cow-dung. In villages in the West many educated people live like farmers. The future of these children lies in the hands of God. We are just doing our duty. Originally, the classes started with just one girl, and now there are so many. They are very happy and so are their parents. We deal with the entire family through the children.

Originally, when the girls saw Swami Satsangi speaking English so fluently, they were surprised. They were even more astonished when they saw her driving vehicles. So they followed suit and the process of education among the girls began. Some of the older girls now go to Deoghar for higher education. In this age education is tantamount to having the third eye, *jnana chakshu*. No society can prosper without education.

All the students read English and practise speaking it too. When I come across them during my morning stroll, they say, "Good morning, Swamiji," and also enquire, "How are you?" When I ask how they are, they say, "Fine."



We have started Sanskrit classes for the boys, who are studying the Bhagavad Gita. Boys are so energetic and aggressive that managing one boy equals managing fifty girls! But it is not negative. Sri Krishna was the same, always teasing the gopi girls as well as the villagers. He was at the centre of trouble every day, but when his mother tried to reprimand him, he would just laugh and run away.

Children are the up and coming generation. I chose the kanyas and batuks to manage every aspect of the yajna, and they handle it all with versatility, charm and innocence. Children should learn early in life how to share their pleasure with their fellow beings. Giving good samskaras in the formative years will bring about changes in their attitude to life and affect the future generations.





Early Samskaras

Spiritual education must be imparted to children from the very beginning of life. Imbibing good *samskaras* or impressions has to start from the moment of conception. The mother is the first guru, teacher and inspirer. Until the child is seven years of age, she is entirely responsible for his destiny, for qualities such as love, compassion and intelligence. This education is maternal, internal or emotional. After the age of seven, society takes over the child's education.

Samskara is a seed sown in the depths of consciousness. We are a bundle of samskaras. Everything we experience in life and after remains embedded as a samskara. Just as a seed sprouts when the time is right, so too these samskaras sprout at the favourable time. Depending on the quality of our samskaras, we remain savage like an animal or are transformed into a human being, fit for higher births.

When a child is innocent, an imprint planted in the mind becomes permanent, which affects the intellect. When understanding develops, children are influenced by suggestions such as not telling lies, and this has an effect. During pregnancy, after the individual soul, the *jivatma*, is implanted in the foetus at four months, the education received in the womb is most influential. Everyone, father, mother or any other household member, should understand this reality. A soul in the mother's womb is very sensitive and is influenced by the surrounding vibrations.

There is a story in the *Srimad Bhagavata* of the great bhakta Prahlad. He was the son of a treacherous and demonical father, a powerful emperor and an atheist. When Prahlad was in the womb, the great sage Rishi Narada initiated the emperor's wife into the Narayana mantra. That was the first samskara passed on to Prahlad. While in his mother's womb, he was exposed to such vibrations that he imbibed a spiritual nature. When Prahlad was growing up, he challenged his father, who tried to destroy him. Ultimately, however, Prahlad was victorious. This story shows that



a child can be educated in the embryonic state through psychic injection imbibed through the mind and ears.

The unborn child will be influenced if the mother attends satsang, keeps good company and sings bhajans and kirtans. If you want your child to become a musician, politician, thief or murderer, expose yourself to that influence. The process of implanting samskaras is not intellectual or rational. It is not necessary to understand or even believe in them, because your awareness is influenced by the fact that they are happening to you. Many samskaras are given at birth to a newborn child and some even before birth in embryo or seed form. There is no intellect there to grasp them, yet their influence is total.



In the vedic tradition there are sixteen traditional samskaras or rites imparted at important stages throughout life. Half are imparted in the first twelve months of life when a being is innocent, untainted and most impressionable. The first samskara is when conception takes place. This samskara is crucial as it shapes the destiny, the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual attributes of the new life. The second is when the child is born. The third is on the ninth day when a name is given. There is another in the sixth month when the child starts eating solid food.

Traditionally, in the seventh year children were initiated into spiritual learning, *upanayana*, when for twelve years a child lived with the guru and acquired knowledge of a wide range of subjects, as well as the simple art of living. He was exposed to the rigours of life, even if from a rich family. The importance of being a responsible member of humanity was instilled at this stage. In the past girls also received this samskara. Education was regarded as a yajna. These days it is more of a ritual, but then it was performed for purely scientific reasons. At the age of seven the pineal gland begins the process of slow but steady decay and the pituitary gland is activated, which sets the ageing process in motion. Upanayana is performed to counteract this influence through Gayatri mantra, pranayama and surya namaskara.

In the gurukul tradition, knowledge is imbibed rather than imposed. It is believed that knowledge is already within, and if the child is provided with the proper environment, the knowledge will unfold. Traditionally, after twelve years in the gurukul, the child returned to his family and was married. Marriage was also a samskara.

Culture depends upon a person's samskaras. Money comes and goes but good samskaras abide. Compassion, discrimination and the ability to make correct decisions come with good samskaras. If good samskaras disappear from your family, what is left? Will you cherish television? No, we want good samskaras, the progressive refinement of personality, stage by stage. The vedic tradition of samskaras has been passed down through the generations. It has been developed, practised and maintained only in India. If we want to improve the quality of our children and, in the course of time, society and the world we live in, then the samskaras, the impressions, we expose our children to are of the utmost importance.





Growing Up Naturally

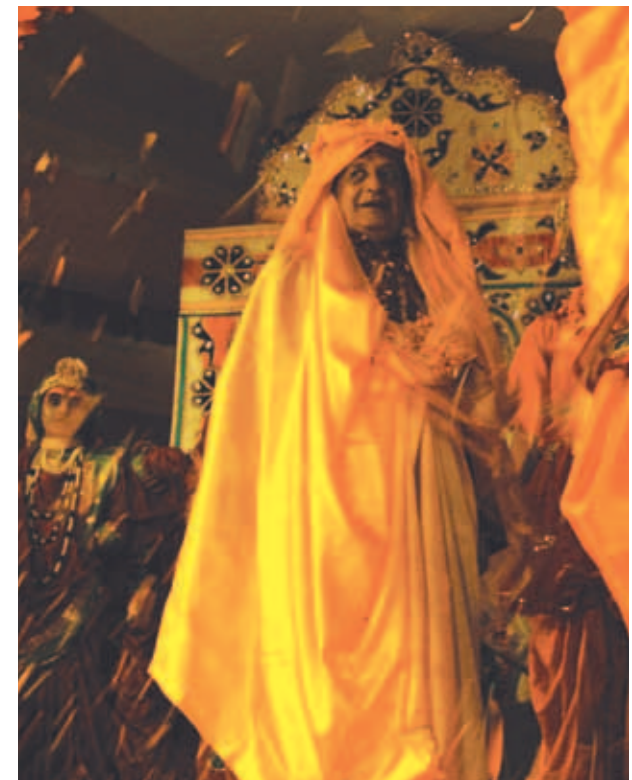
Parents are the greatest obstacle on the path of children because they do not allow their children to grow naturally. Most parents want their children to grow up in their pattern, which is acceptable if the pattern is good, but most parents are worried, dishonest, sick and unstable. Children must grow up

naturally and learn in their own way by trial and error. Children should never be scolded or punished. Adults and children have very different mental frequencies. The conditioning that leads a parent to scold a child is not present in the child's brain and, therefore, the child cannot understand your reasoning at all.

Telling children what is right and wrong, good and bad, is the complex of a guilty mind. When children grow up, they will

understand the difference. Let children enjoy their schooling, rather than always telling them to read a lot, study hard or to try and become great or important. Children should feel they have time to play, sing and make mischief. They should feel that their teachers are loving friends.

Our accepted lifestyle is not the ideal way of living. Casting your children in your own mould means asking them to make the same mistakes as you made. Your mould is defective. You suffer from illness, you worry, you fight, you cheat, you lie, and



you have negative thoughts in your mind. Do you want your child to be like that? Adults suffer from this weakness, and it is precisely the reason why humanity is not progressing faster.

If you let your children be free and independent, they will mould themselves accordingly. No one has ever progressed without making mistakes. A child's behaviour depends entirely on how his parents handle him. If your child does not want to go to school, do not force him. Swami Niranjan never went to school, but today he can converse on any subject under the sun.



He used to play and get up to every possible type of mischief, and I allowed it.

It is most important to teach children music and to let them play. Do not overburden them with too much bookish knowledge. Children enjoy music, playing and making noise, and there is nothing wrong with that. A teacher should be like a friend, not always saying, "Do this, don't do that." Until the age of seven, forget that you have to teach children anything. There should be education through positive samskara. Children should be allowed to grow and develop in a natural way.

If children are suppressed or restricted, you will not be able to control them later on. Children have an excess of energy and should run, play and enjoy a lot of sport. It is not good for them to simply sit and study alone. Their energy has to be balanced. Parents have the bad habit of nagging their children, saying, "You are not studying. Have you done your homework?" They never say, "Why don't you go and play football?" or "There is a good movie showing today. Take some money and see it." In India, when children want to see movies, their parents agree reluctantly. Children have a different level of consciousness, a pure motivation and a high level of awareness. They are very close to God. The moment we grow up, the distance between God and us widens. If their natural state of innocence is to be maintained and allowed to evolve naturally, children must be allowed to play and be free.

Children become great through the quality of their mind, intelligence and receptivity, not through study or qualifications. Of course, one must have qualifications in today's world, but when children are continually under pressure to pass exams, they become scared. If children play and have fun, they will



succeed in their studies and in life, but if they study too much, they will spoil their lives. Playing balances the muscular and nervous energies and improves the blood circulation. A child who sits in front of the television set all day or studies with one leg up on the table becomes very sluggish, and his studies suffer. Then a tutor is called in to help, but this is not the answer. Children should be left free to play. I grieve to see what is being done to children these days.



Purpose of Education

Education has two purposes. The first is to equip you with qualifications so you can earn a living in agriculture, commerce or technology. You receive instruction about the outside world. The second purpose is to impart knowledge about the inner world. This form of education teaches you about yourself, your body and your social dealings. In today's system of education we have neither. The instruction imparted is of no use either in material or spiritual life, either in the outer or inner world.

In India, schools are competent as far as elementary education is concerned, but they are not teaching anything of national value. Education must cater for the social and national needs of the time. India is on the threshold of the twenty-first century, but the mentality is back in the sixteenth century. Many villagers still live a fourteenth century lifestyle. Some towns are living at the level of the nineteenth century where trains still run on coal and steam. The nation cannot make economic progress until students are trained to earn their living. Unless students receive practical training, there is no freedom from poverty, family members cannot be cared for and elderly parents are neglected.

On the spiritual education front there is complete darkness and ignorance. People do not know what spirituality is. The Upanishads talk about two *vidyas*, or forms of knowledge. *Apara vidya* refers to formal, academic or worldly knowledge which helps you to earn a living. It gives empirical knowledge about mathematics, science, astrology, physics, chemistry, biology and other material sciences. *Para vidya* is transcendental knowledge, spiritual knowledge.



Nowhere in the world have these two forms of knowledge been incorporated into the education system. Everywhere the stress is on empirical knowledge. Therefore, the nation will have to rethink. In fact, the whole world will have to take a fresh look at education. One type of education will not serve the whole world. In Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, China and Central Asia, only one system of education was adopted, which is why there is economic imbalance. Students spend many years at college and university, yet there are no jobs when they graduate.

The purpose of education should be twofold. First, it should make a student capable of earning as early as possible without spending so many years in school. Second, it should develop the personality so that the student can discover his own self. A major reason for social disorder is that we have not discovered appropriate forms of education for different types of people. In Africa or India, children are taught about political leaders, kings and queens and how many children they had. This kind of education does not help at all. What does it matter to a poor carpenter, a farmer or a mason? He wants his son to earn as soon as he is eighteen. The son graduates, but he does not know what to do. He does not even know how to drive a car, so he cannot become a taxi driver.

Education should not be universal, but modified for different types of people. Children should be taught from an early age how to cope with the demands of their day-to-day life. In India, more than seventy percent of the population is





based in agriculture, so the education of rural children must be oriented towards farming, cattle breeding and small business. However, people do not demand this type of education from their government. A sophisticated, technological education will not help this country. The more sophisticated technology becomes, the more you can expect the unemployment that exists in highly technological countries in the West.

There is a lack of practical education in India today. A movement needs to be launched to promote vocational or job-oriented education. The purpose of education today is to earn a living. Those of you living in villages, towns and cities must rethink your education system. If you can see that much of what is taught in schools today is unnecessary, then why continue admitting your children and increasing the number of students?

I took sannyasa at the age of nineteen and lived in my guru's ashram for twelve years and I never used the knowledge I obtained at school. However, whatever skills I learned in my guru's ashram, whether typing, accounting, book-keeping, translating, printing or construction work, all proved of great use to me in later life. The most valuable lesson I learned was that life is ever flowing, always moving ahead. One just has to watch the phenomenal world as it comes, and take it in one's stride. I learned many practical things from Swami Sivananda. Now I think that my first eighteen years of school education were useless. The same is true for many people I see around me.





Changing Times

Parents have problems everywhere in the world where children have been exposed to modern education. When children are exposed to strange thought processes, philosophies and interactions, problems arise because they develop too quickly for their age. Such exposure is abundant in our society, especially with the so-called information boom.

In India, however, rural society is still untouched by this exposure. The traditional exposure is: "Let mother be your God, let father be your God, let the teacher be your God, let the guest be your God." This classical knowledge has been in their minds for many centuries, and has not been challenged as yet. Rural society has been able to absorb the influence of modern education, whereas people living in towns and cities have not.



Nowadays you have to take a different approach with your children. You can't have the attitude of a rural society. Modern children have very unstable minds, and if you reprimand them too strongly, they may run away or do anything. Their genetic transfer is not very systematic or even certain.

Marriage has lost its scientific basis. There is a genetic quality in each parent, and the child is their transfer. If I am debauched, it is due to the genetic transfer from my parents. Nowadays the basis of marriage is sexual and emotional, but love cannot be the ultimate factor for a scientific marriage. Marriage should take place only when the physical, mental and spiritual attributes match, because then the genetic transfer will be correct. That is why children are completely out of control in modern society.



In my time we had great respect for our parents. We led simple lives. An atmosphere of mutual respect existed, but now it does not. Our generation has passed. The main difference today is that children think they know more than their parents, that they are right and their parents are wrong. If children always think that they know more than their parents, how can you correct them?

Children have changed due to cultural exposure, but you have not changed. Parents need to change with the changing times. Children today are not willing to accept you as God, nor are you God. You lie and accept bribes, but ask your children not to do so. Children have to be dealt with very carefully now. It is wrong to think of your child as your junior because the child does not think like that. Talk to your children some day, in private, with love in your heart, and they will open their hearts to you. You have silenced them with your slaps. They think, why do they ask us to do what they do not do themselves?

This attitude has also reached the villages, but the village children are still more submissive. They may not like the way their parents think, but they have no choice but to obey their parents' commands. In general, however, the culture of giving orders to children is either finished or moving very fast towards its end. You have forgotten your childhood. Do you remember how many fantasies you had when you were six, seven or eight? Children have a lot of dreams and imagination. Their brains are very sharp, but we take time to grasp what is happening because the brain slows down with age.

To manage a child well, do not be too attached. Think that he or she is a guinea pig on which to experiment, not your dear child. But be careful. If you give negative instructions to children, they will do exactly what you ask them not to. Always give positive suggestions, never negative suggestions.

It was a different era when children listened to the wishes of their parents and treated them with respect. Earlier generations had a different attitude to today's generation. That attitude was



right for that day and age. Today's attitude is right for this day and age. Neither one is the truth, they are beliefs. You may have given birth to your children, but they are not yours. Never consider your children to be junior to you because, in fact, they are senior to you. The child is the father of the man.



Education for the Future

Children are the prospect of the future. They will have to be prepared, not just in the context of one country, but in the context of the whole world. The principal part of your earnings should be spent on giving your children a good and modern education. It is essential that children advance in their studies. Nowadays education is of many kinds. Sports and modelling are also a type of education, and sportspeople and models earn good incomes. Therefore, education should be such that children are in tune with society, present and future. The future society will be a hi-tech one. The dreams of the current generation are hi-tech too.

Nowadays girls also have many options. Earlier, in both eastern and western society, the only option for girls was to get married. The options of studying or setting up a business did not exist. Today all these options are open. A woman can become president, chief of the army staff, a scientist, space traveller or revolutionary. She can do anything. The tradition of differentiating between boys and girls should end. The affluent need to take the lead in this cause because the poor cannot do so.

Every year we distribute prasad to hundreds of children from the local schools. We give them everything they will need for one year of study. I tell them to take a keen interest in their studies and acquire knowledge so they can stand on their own two feet. If you have to fashion a decent future, you should take your career seriously. The government has offered a number of concessions to the backward classes. Marriage and progeny should be the last priority. First is education, second is profession and third is production.

The village children have ambitions, but their parents are ill-informed. The village girls tend domestic cattle, collect the cow-dung in the early morning, graze the cattle and goats, and by the time they are eighteen or nineteen they are the mothers of two or three children. To beget a number of children was the necessity of the past, when our society was primitive and agriculture was the mainstay, but now the times have changed.

The amount budgeted for the education of a girl should be the same as for a boy. Through education, girls should fulfil their dreams of becoming something, businesswomen, industrialists or social workers, anything at all. Along with establishing a career, those who wish to set up house should do so. It seems illogical that parents should arrange a girl's marriage. If I wish to get married, the choice should be mine, not my father's. This irrational method should end, and the one who wishes to get married should have the right to choose.

If the social aspirations of children are dictated by us, we will feel burdened and the children will feel suffocated their whole life through. This happened in the past with our mothers and wives. From the psychological point of view, they were a complex-ridden sex. Society must give its children the chance to express their talents if the country is to progress.

It is the job of parents to provide opportunities for their children. Opportunity means prospects. If you have a shoe or textile business, you may expect your child to take it up too, but that is not offering a prospect. If you try to honestly assess whether the child is better off looking after the shop or doing something else, you are offering a prospect. Prospect comes into effect when the child goes forward on his own quest and returns something through the quest. In today's age, name and fame are not enough; one has to have money too. It is the age of balance.

The future generation depends on how you train the children. Every generation has its own peculiarities, problems, likes and dislikes. Your children don't like what you like and don't dislike what you dislike. What you dislike is what they like. This is called change, and it is natural. Every generation has to change just as day has to change into night and night into day. If there were just one generation or one culture, it would become monotonous. Change has to come about, and the most natural change is generational change.



2002





Prasad

Prasad means happiness and joy. Any giving in an ashram or temple is *prasad*. *Prasad* is an offering of goodwill, and it carries good wishes for your health, happiness, prosperity and peace. Offering, *daan*, is one of the three essential components of *yajna*, along with worship and ritual. *Daan* is unconditional giving. It is the *prasad* of *Devi* which is given to everyone.

The *prasad* of the *yajna* is highly auspicious because it is given after being blessed by *Devi*. She awakens the prosperity already residing there and each person is impregnated with spiritual blessings. When you receive the *prasad* at a *yajna*, do not think it is just an object you are receiving, which perhaps you already have in abundance in your home. Instead, understand that the rites and rituals of *tantra* can transform even the most mundane object, act, thought, word or deed into a vehicle for receiving divine grace in your life.

There are different types of *prasad*. When a *rajarishi* does *sadhana*, the *prasad* should be befitting a *rajarishi*. A *rajarishi* is one who has lived like a *raja* or king and also like a *rishi*, one who has inner knowledge, who sees the inner light and hears the inner voice. A *raja* symbolizes wealth and power, which are the positive qualities of a king. *Jnana* or knowledge is the quality of a *rishi*. Will a *rajarishi* give an ordinary sweet as *prasad*? No, he will give cows to villagers, bicycles to schoolchildren, houses to poor people and fine clothes to newlyweds.

Prasad is not charity or social service. Charity is the mother of poverty. Social service is giving aid at the time of emergencies or natural calamities. Whenever you help others do it in the spirit of offering service to the Lord. If a *sadhu* comes to your house and you are well off, it is your duty to give him some food, but do it as an offering. If a beggar comes to your house, feel that you are giving to the Lord. God can take any form. God can come as an important person or as a big businessman, but if He comes as a weak person, a blind person, a beggar, will you treat him with respect? Always thinking that we will be cheated destroys our faith and makes us narrow. A king or a *rishi* is not afraid of anybody. Whenever you help others, remember that you are doing it for God.



If you really want to help people, you need a special power from God, a spiritual power. Without God's sanction, you cannot do even one good turn. I have an agreement with Lakshmi. She said, "I have given you a blank cheque, but it is not for your personal comfort. I permit you to meet all your needs, but not your desires. Whatever I give to you, you give to others. After pooja, distribute the prasad to everybody according to their needs." If we think we can do good in the world, we are wrong. Lakshmi is in charge of the wealth in the world.

The process of offering is very simple. We offer to the Divine Mother what has been given to us and then it is distributed as prasad from her to the people who need it





the most. Your offerings and the Divine Mother's grace are distributed as prasad. Accept it in that spirit. Those who distribute the prasad are blessed. To give prasad is a meritorious act and to offer prasad is your duty. We only give prasad, not gifts or donations. Whatever sari, shawl, shirt or other item you receive is not a gift, it is from the hands of the Almighty Lord.

Prasad should be taken as a blessing and received with reverence. You offer to Devi and I offer it back as Devi's prasad. You present your offerings to the Divine Mother and she gives you her prasad in return. You have made all the offerings. Prasad means happiness. Prasad is given in the name of God, so accept what you are receiving with joy. God is one and He is in your heart, in your head, in everyone's heart.



The Art of Giving

At the Rajasooya Yajna you learn the art of giving and receiving. One who gives receives the same thing back. During the yajna, items such as clothing, grain and kitchen utensils are offered as bhet. Bhet is the art of giving and receiving. There is a saying that your vessel can hold only as much as the capacity it is used to holding. So to receive more you have to enlarge your vessel. This is only possible through giving. To give or share is an art.

Once the sound 'Da!' thundered three times throughout the heavens. The sages said the sound meant three things: to give, to restrain and to be kind. Human beings should give, devas should restrain their pleasure-seeking and demons should be kind to others. For human beings the message is give, give and give. To whom? To those who need it, the blind, paralyzed, helpless, orphaned, sick and unhappy.

Miserliness is the weakest point in our character. We have the prasad distributed by the children as we wish to banish meanness from our society. Children should learn how to share when they are young. They should imitate the habit of giving, and thus acquire good samskaras. If children are trained in giving and sharing, they will know how to give when they grow up.

The society which only knows the culture of receiving and not giving promotes social exploitation. To strike a balance in society we should teach children to follow the culture of give and take. Parents teach their children how to receive and take, but they must teach how to give as well. Otherwise the gap between affluence and poverty cannot be bridged. If we don't receive from others, how can we give? To keep the element of social balance, provision is made in the yajna for the giving of prasad.

The external and major aspect of the yajna is learning how to give. Yajnas teach us about giving. We are all selfish. To accumulate is human nature. It happens on all levels: physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, psychic and spiritual. We accumulate for our pleasure, but does it really give us pleasure? All property has three destinations: *daan*, offering,



bhoga, enjoyment, and *nasha*, destruction. You may enjoy it or you may offer it, otherwise it will be destroyed. Once we are able to give, we become free of attachments, and it is that freedom that we seek in our life.

The underprivileged of the world are a challenge to your spiritual life. People are suffering mentally, physically and economically. In the ancient vedic culture giving and sharing were mandatory. Ten percent of one's earnings was for those without an income. The purpose of spiritual life is caring for God's creation. Whatever you spend on your own pleasure and comfort for three days a month should go to the have-nots, who are the majority in society.

Enjoy good clothes, food, friendships and so on, but don't ignore those who are living below the poverty line, without medical facilities or food to eat. People often think that if they show compassion, their gifts will be misused. Our life is God's gift, His prasad. We are all gifts of God. He has given us a body, mind and spirit out of compassion, but we have misused His gift. So why worry about the misuse of your small gifts? When you give, do not expect a return. Love is unconditional. Give to everyone, even the affluent. God does not discriminate between rich and poor. He gives to all. This is the way of God and we should learn it.

I regard all the members of Rikhia panchayat as my disciples. I have made each household my household. In Vedanta it is called *atmabhava*. I only pass on to them what you have given. It is not mine. It is you who have given it as bhet. Bhet has been converted into prasad like the monsoon is transformed into rain. You gifted, you offered, and it has been given as prasad. The philosophy is very simple. The entire panchayat is my ashram. Every house is my house. Their pains and pleasures are my own. Their poverty is my poverty and their happiness is my happiness. You have to see yourself in everyone and you have to see everyone within your own self.





Share Your Wealth

Prosperity, *artha*, desire, *kama*, virtue, *dharma*, and liberation, *moksha*, are the four legs of the table of life. All four legs must be equally strong and stable, so the whole of life should be divided into four ashramas or periods. The first twenty-five years of life, *brahmacharya*, are for education and experience. The next twenty-five years, *grihastha*, are for hard work, living with one's husband, wife and children, relatives, friends and society, toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing, maturing. The third quarter is *vanaprastha*, when you retire and think about your spiritual self. Finally, the fourth period of life, *sannyasa*, is for moksha, realization, merging the self with God.

Those who go via this route should dedicate one part of their assets and earnings for others. They should share their talents, capacities and material achievements with the have-nots of society. In the Vedas, Puranas and Smritis we are advised that householders should perform yajna. According to the Bhagavad Gita, yajna does not just mean a ritual where pooja items are consigned to the flames and thereby dedicated to God. The word yajna refers to the three processes of every act we perform: production, distribution and consumption.

Sharing one's wealth with others is the first duty of a householder. The produce from your farm or business, the salary you earn from your job must be shared with those members of society who are less fortunate than you. Do not forget that you owe a share of your wealth to the needy members of society. Remember that you do not have an exclusive right over the wealth you call your own. Grihastha ashrama is a system of distribution. Nobody in society can earn wealth independently in isolation.

You can earn only because of the social network of interdependence. Everybody depends upon everybody else. Spiritual life in relation to artha and kama is possible only when you share your wealth with others, when you distribute your wealth equitably. If you earn and spend only on yourself, or save and deposit your earnings in the bank in your own name, then dharma and moksha cannot be attained, and spiritual life cannot be lived without them. This kind of self-indulgence is only deception. It is leading an undisciplined life. Grihastha ashrama does not only mean reproducing and earning wealth, but proper distribution of wealth in society. You must give back to society whatever it has given to you in the form of personal wealth and prosperity.

If you fulfil your social obligations, only then can you expect progress in spiritual life. A householder must fulfil his social obligations, whether he is a farmer, businessman, teacher or industrialist. Whatever your income and accomplishments, society must be a compulsory shareholder in it. You must spend part of your income on public and social services. Society needs hospitals, orphanages, food distribution centres in famine-ridden areas, so you must contribute your share. You should not spend all your income only on yourself and your family. If you do, you are selfish.

A householder with a family can attain God's grace, but you will have to renounce selfishness. Set aside a part of your achievement, whether grain or money, power or name, for a social purpose which the people in that country need at the time. Somewhere there is anarchy, somewhere crime, somewhere AIDS, somewhere drug addiction. Give a part of



your earnings and assets to alleviate these problems and fulfil your social obligations. That is your social debt, because you cannot develop, earn or prosper without a proper, stable society.

There are three main desires: the desire for wealth, for a good wife or husband and for children. Most people want a good partner, a comfortable house or flat and, if possible, a car, and then a child. These three desires are not an impediment in spiritual



life, but an expression of your nature. Just because you want to have a child or attain prosperity does not mean you are worldly. This is very clearly explained in the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna asked Krishna the same question, and Krishna said, "You must follow the dharma which nature has designed for you."

If you are a householder, you should be a householder. In the world, most people are householders. So how can you think that God will not be pleased with you if you also have them? God will be pleased with you, but please remember that your child is not the only child. There is some other child also who needs your love.

Open Your Heart

God permeates the whole of creation. The easiest way to attain Him is to have a genuine feeling of compassion for your fellow beings. However, you are so engrossed in yourselves that you have forgotten the totality of God's existence. Your world ends once you have thought about yourself and your family. How small you have made yourselves. But still you pay lip service and proclaim that the whole world is your family.

When your arteries are blocked, you become selfish. When your arteries are open, when open heart surgery has been performed on you, you become selfless. Those of you who have given generously to the villagers do not have heart problems because my bypass surgery has been successful. When your heart is blocked, your cheque remains in the inner pocket. When your arteries are blocked, you are selfish. If you have

blocked arteries, open up your heart to me. When you return home, leave your heart here. I will open a bank of hearts.

Heart problems take place not only in the physical body, but also in the mental, spiritual and psychic bodies. These heart problems are more real, and as a result you are unhappy, dissatisfied, angry or melancholy. When the surgeon opens your heart up, he puts you on an artificial respirator for some time. During the five days of the yajna you all function with an artificial heart. Afterwards, you will be back on your normal heart, but with a bypass performed by the expert heart surgeon, Swami Satyananda Saraswati.

Once a saint named Ekanath was taking Ganga water from the north of India to the southern tip, walking all the way. After braving all the difficulties he finally reached Rameshwaram. He



was about to enter the Shiva temple when he saw a donkey, dying of thirst. Should he offer the precious holy water for Shiva's abhisheka as intended, or first quench the donkey's thirst? Ekanath was a saint who believed in the God residing in the temple, but he also knew that God is omnipresent.

Having such faith, he immediately saw God in the donkey. He gave the water to the donkey and saved its life. Because he was a saint he could do this good turn without hesitation. How many of you would have thought of giving the water meant for God to a worthless creature like a donkey?

Unless you consider another person as yourself, there is non-conduction within you. The Vedas, Upanishads, rishis and munis have all told us that feeling oneness with others and



identifying with their woes is *sarvatma bhava*, all-encompassing affection for the creatures of the whole world. You must have the same intensity of feeling and compassion for the suffering of others as you have for your own self.

You may practise mantra or prayers, you may go to a temple or church, but never forget the unfortunate person who is suffering, who does not have what he needs. What he does not have, you and I have in plenty. If I have ten loaves of bread, I can easily give away five because he needs them and I don't. This good sense came to me in 1990 when God told me to look after His neighbours as He had looked after me. Yes, He did look after me. Every cell and atom of my body and mind are full of life, not because of my own doings, but because of Him. I am what I am because of Him.

For one with an open heart, the whole world is a neighbourhood and everyone is their neighbour. One who has a small, closed heart thinks in terms of 'this is mine and that is yours'. But I do not want to be limited by that thought. I believe that everything belongs to God because He has given it to me. He is the owner, the treasurer, the ocean of prosperity, grace, mercy and love. He gave me everything so that I could give to others. Everyone should think like this. If you want the light of God, which is covered within you, the hidden light, to be uncovered, you need to expand your heart.



Practical Giving

In ancient times, the site of Ganga Darshan ashram in Munger was called Karna Chaura, because Karna's palace stood there. Close by is the temple of the goddess Chandi, where Karna used to perform worship followed by havan and then give gold to the brahmins, who were very poor in those days and lived on alms. When I came to Rikhia, I thought, "Let this also be Karna Chaura. Instead of gold we will give clothes."

The significance of a gift at a yajna is that it fulfils a need, so the prasad should be practical and useful. It is no use offering flowers, greeting cards and incense. A gift is not just to please someone or to pass on your emotion. Poor village folk do not need the things that affluent people love. Whether it is a blanket, a shawl, a pair of shoes, an umbrella, a hurricane lantern, a satchel for a school child, a compass or a pencil

case, a gift should be pragmatic. What is the use of transistors, television sets, walkie-talkies or microwave ovens? A gas oven is of no use as a gas cylinder costs more than two hundred and fifty rupees, and a poor man hardly gets forty rupees a day, if at all. With that he has to have his daughter married and look after his medical bills. Therefore, find out what needs to be given. Don't do it just for your own pleasure.

In this birth we have the opportunity to serve the poor and downtrodden by offering food, clothes, money, medicine, books, toys, tools, building materials, bicycles, cows, bullocks, and other things which can help to remove the distress from the lives of individuals, families and communities, and bring peace, plenty, happiness, health and prosperity to the environment. During the Rajasooya Yajna, *vastra*, clothing, *patra*, kitchen and cooking utensils, and *anna*, grain, are offered to all. All three items are both practical and auspicious. Cloth is the greatest gift in the world because we live with it twenty-four hours of the day. A container keeps your possessions safe and intact. Food sustains, nourishes and cures.

The offerings from the yajna are conveyed to deserving people in many forms, including housing, medical aid as well as the means of employment such as rickshaws, hand carts, bicycles and sewing machines. The young brides are offered good luck kits. The villagers are offered grain, household utensils, agricultural implements, tools of trade, blankets, clothing and woollens. The children are offered educational articles. We also help the widows who are ignored by society, as well as the old men and women. Hundreds and thousands of families from Rikhia and neighbouring panchayats receive this prasad.

It is our duty to see that no one is deprived of basic minimum needs. It is all very well to think about others, but you have to implement your positive thoughts. To help people you have to make them self-sufficient and give them an opportunity

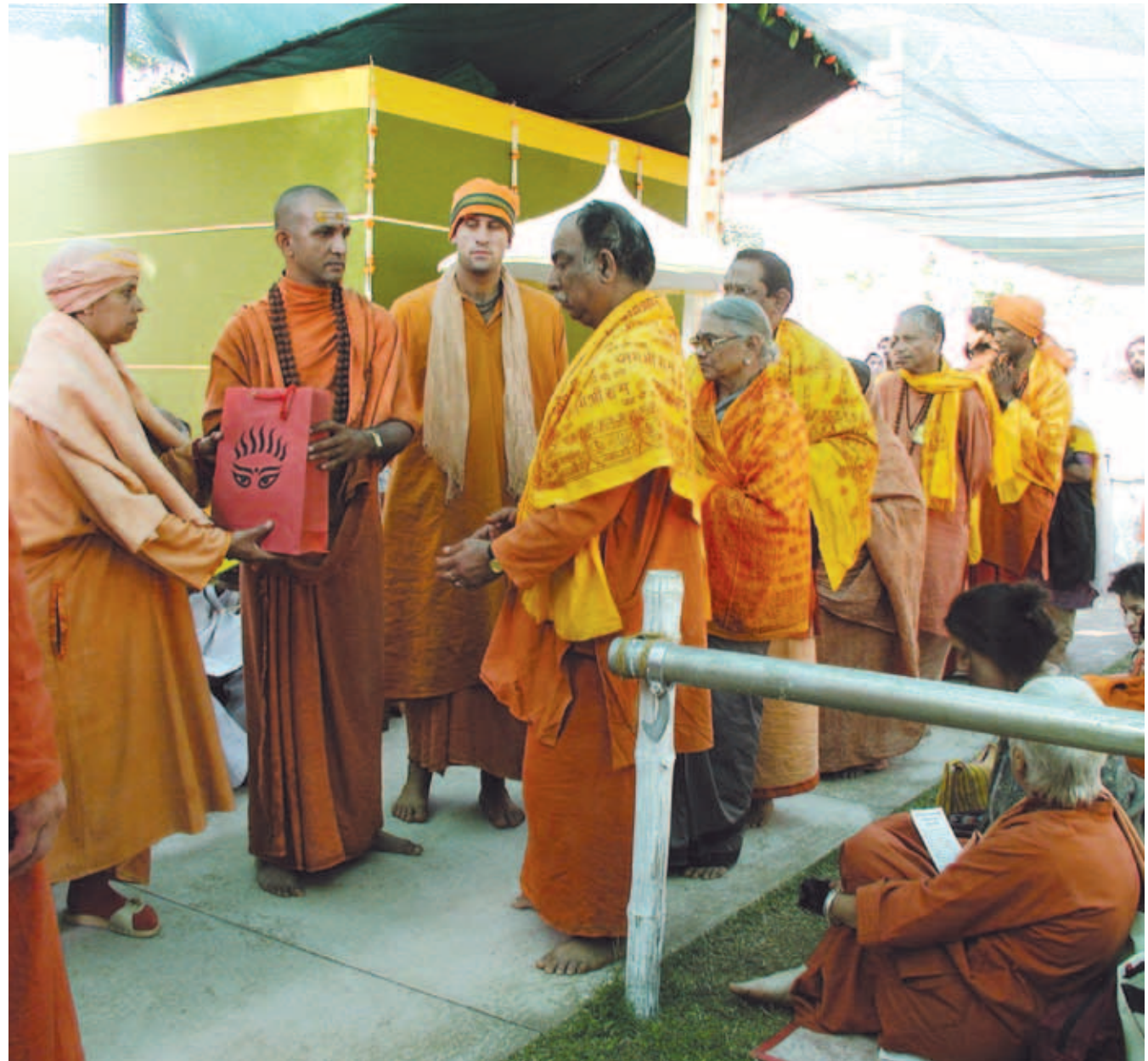


to build up their skills. Offer items that will be useful to the whole family. Find out what people need and take practical steps to help them. We cannot help people just by giving them money. Real help means enabling people to generate their own strength and ability.

Whatever your financial or social status, you can serve the downtrodden by offering physical work, professional skills and genuine empathy or compassion. For example, a poet, writer or artist working with the media can inspire people to start thinking altruistically. The head of a panchayat or any social or political group can inspire people to live for others, not just for themselves. The produce from one's farm, the profit from one's business, the salary earned from one's job can be shared with those who are less fortunate.

In every corner of the world there are hungry souls whose children go to sleep without a morsel of food. Hunger and starvation exist not only in India, but throughout the world. Food is needed for survival. If man dies hungry, God will also die. God's existence depends on man. You may not have seen the poor, but I have lived among them all my life and my habits are like any poor man in India.

When I eat, I think of the hungry and starving and send food to such houses. When the cold hits me, the first thought that crosses my mind is whether others have protection. Thinking about the poor is like thinking about God. Before eating have you ever thought, "Is there someone close to me who has no food to eat?" If I can help somebody, give some comfort or facility, even if it causes me a little unpleasantness, it is a worthwhile sacrifice. This is what spiritual life is about. Be generous in thought, word and deed.



Selfless Service

Swami Sivananda always emphasized that serving others is the stepping stone to spiritual life. *Nishkama seva*, selfless service, is necessary for self-transformation, to clean the rajo and tamo gunas of the mind. It is like detergent. Selfless service doesn't just mean work; you should have a feeling for it in your heart.

People are so busy running after money that there is no time for selfless service. The nuclear family is the beginning and end of all selfishness. No one worries about anyone else's family. You should not earn money just to indulge your own children, but to take care of others as well. In India, if you visit forty houses, you will come across scarcity, suffering, poverty, darkness and dejection. For millions and millions of people the state of affairs is abysmal. They have no shelter, no food, no cooking facilities, no toilet, not even water to drink.

What have you done for such people? You are wasting your time if you just wrestle with your own mind twenty-four hours a day. To find peace of mind you must serve the poor, destitute, disabled, sick, hungry and helpless. You don't have to go to a temple or church. You don't have to become a sannyasin or yogi. You don't have to practise asana, pranayama or meditation. Just do whatever you can with your mind, knowledge, influence and strength to help the underprivileged. God loves those who love Him in this form.

Mother Theresa was so blessed by God that she could serve the most neglected, condemned and despised members of society till her last breath. She picked up those people whom nobody even dared to look at. But nobody wants to spend money on the underprivileged. Nobody wants to help out a poor boy or get a poor girl married. You are ready to spend on yourself, but if you are not prepared to spend one paise on a poor person, do not talk about God!

Selfishness must be renounced in order to attain God's grace. Start working for the benefit of the deprived. You owe them a share of your time and assets. Most leaders talk a lot,



but do nothing to uplift the needy sectors of society. However, those who are dedicated to spiritual life can do something. Include everybody within your own heart. Have the same intensity of feeling and compassion for others as you have for our own self.

I have practised every form of yoga, but ultimately I found that when I began to think about others, God began to think about me. The mandate I received from God to

care for my neighbours led me to ask myself how the world could benefit from my spiritual gain and self-realization. A metamorphosis took place in my personality, way of life and destiny. I changed my teaching and my way of thinking. Then God began to show me the path. Now helping others has become my obsession.

My only teaching now is to practise *satkarma*, selfless, positive actions. Do good acts and earn divine merit. When



you serve your husband, wife and children, it is just karma. If you feed the hungry or help a poor person, that is selfless or divine karma. Satkarma is any act that helps somebody physically, mentally, spiritually, monetarily or in any other way, or all ways.

Serve mankind, those who are sick, who are poor, who are bad, who want spiritual life, who want your love. Your dharma is to work for others. Until your heart is open to the

suffering and misery of others, your sadhana will be in vain. Selfless service acts as a detergent and washes away the dirt of karma. In order to experience spiritual life while living in the world, enlarge the scope of your sadhana from asana, pranayama, japa and meditation to include serving those who are in need.

Does a river drink its own water? Do fruits and vegetables eat themselves? No, they give it all to us. This is *paramartha*,

the highest service. Serving others selflessly, doing good works for others without any ulterior motive will become the social philosophy of the twenty-first century. It will be an age in which everyone will have a thought for others. To think about others is to think about God. To worship others is to worship God. This is the lesson those who are travelling on the spiritual path have to learn. Selfless service is a complete spiritual sadhana. It is the simplest and easiest path to God.

2003





Bhakti Yoga Culture

The generation of the twenty-first century will belong to the bhakti yoga culture. Bhakti is your inner relationship with God, directing your mind and emotions to God. The twentieth century was a culture of indulgence, a utilitarian consumer culture. The inner values of a civilization are responsible for its prosperity or downfall. In the twentieth century, the inner values of our culture have been destroyed. Now people realize that politics and materialism are not the way to individual or world peace.

Yoga was responsible for weaning people from the material to the transcendental world, for ushering in a spiritual awakening. Now people will be more and more inspired to adopt the path of bhakti. Throughout history, whenever instability, political injustice and disharmony have increased, bhakti has been revived. During any transition period, society experiences a social vacuum, and people begin to reject it. This is happening in the West where people are turning towards spirituality.



Bhakti will be the science of the twenty-first century. Scientists will change their focus from research into matter to investigating feelings, emotions, devotion and bhakti, and their effects on the chemistry, behaviour and experience of the human body and mind. Emotions are far more powerful and meaningful than matter. Faith and trust are the basis of bhakti. You cannot see them, but their effects can be felt on the body, because they are emotional qualities. You can know the cause through the effect

Scientists say there is energy within matter. We say that beyond energy is consciousness, beyond consciousness is the soul and beyond the soul is divinity. The ultimate essence of matter is God, and matter is the manifestation of divinity. We are all manifestations of divinity. Scientists will not investigate the soul, the spirit, atma, because they say it does not exist, but they can certainly research the influence of bhakti on the human personality. Only in bhakti yoga can the human mind stabilize itself easily. Once scientists begin to reflect on this, spiritual science will be reborn.

Bhakti brings about a transformation in awareness, like a chemical change. It causes a metamorphosis in one's thoughts, actions and mind as well as in reactions and lifestyle. These changes can be seen and experienced. Those who reached the ultimate stage of bhakti, like Mirabai, Kabir and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, have told us that bhakti is divine energy, transcendental love. It is not the ordinary emotion of love. When your mind is fully submerged in something, it becomes one with that object. When you turn your love towards God, the mind begins to lose itself in God, and the chasm between the devotee and God begins to narrow.

The industrial revolution was a gift from the scientists and the bhakti revolution will also be their gift. The time will come for redefining bhakti as a part of our personal lives and as a means of redemption from pain. If you were to search for an individual cure for all the problems in the human mind, consciousness and psyche, it would take a lifetime. However, bhakti is a



common cure for them all. Just as we have been successful in establishing contact with outer space, in the same way we will work to discover the many facets that comprise man's complex and extraordinary mind and behaviour patterns.

The subject of God has to be brought forth very systematically and scientifically. Realized saints and scientists will have to join hands to do this work. The preliminary groundwork for these enquiries and discussions on God and bhakti will be done by people who have realized divinity in their own lives. The twentieth century did not have many people with the capacity to inspire others to lead a divine life. Many preachers spoke about God, but unless God is in you and works through you that is not enough. Only saints and scientists or rishis can propagate bhakti and dharma. They alone can see beyond matter and dissect it to its smallest principle.

Whether you are on the Jewish, Christian, Muslim or Hindu path, you will have to direct your mind to matters beyond this world. Try to inspire your children to take a new direction. In Kali Yuga, the present age, there are two main sadhanas – singing God's name and helping others. Sing kirtans and bhajans, associate with sadhus and saints, read the lives of great saints. Try to draw their inspiration into your life. Give some time to serving God. You have served your children and parents, but you have not served your soul, which has always been your protector and your witness.

Bhakti is the path, God is the destiny and you and I are the travellers. I spent years believing that God was without name or form, but my views changed because I have been convinced by my personal experience. Something transcendental has to come as a focus for the mind. People have developed their emotions during the present era and now these feelings have to be redirected or streamlined. Bhakti is not just a philosophy, but a science which can transform your thinking pattern and basic tendencies. It is a force which will influence our civilization, culture and relationships in the new millennium.





Bhakti Bhava

Bhakti is faith and pure love, it is an expression of *bhavana*, deep inner feeling from the heart towards God. The basis of bhakti is the heart, emotion. To experience bhakti, however, you must redirect your emotions from the inauspicious to the auspicious. Bhakti in its full form is present within each one of us, but it is turned towards worldly affairs. It is directed towards attachment and material love, enmity, jealousy and desire. This feeling is the same bhavana a child has for his mother, or a husband for his wife, or one friend for another. Bhavana is an energy flow. You do not have to be taught how to develop your feelings because they already exist. You only have to learn how to channel them.

Bhakti is an all pervading essence in all beings. The feeling for God is bhakti, the feeling for one's enemy is revenge, for one's beloved it is passion, for one's child affection, for one's friend friendship, and for money it is greed. Just as you have a deep feeling of terror, passion or enmity, in the same way, there is a deep feeling of true love for God. Instead of directing your emotions towards fear, anger and hatred, you have to direct them towards God.

Bhakti is the ultimate point of fusion, when you split the atom and explode the nucleus. Bhakti is not external worship where you go to a temple or a church, say prayers, offer flowers and do pooja. In bhakti you have to develop the feelings, not the intellect or reason. A time comes when your life must be steered by positive feelings. When these feelings come into play, God takes a form. He is seen, He begins to speak. This is my experience. Once my heart took over, even a stone turned into a talking god engulfed in light. Love and bhakti can move mountains. Love is very powerful. Therefore, rely on your heart, on your bhakti, not on your brain.

To learn bhakti you do not need to go to school or read books. Bhakti is singing, hearing and writing His name, drawing His picture, living with people who talk about God. This will

not only make you free from tension and high blood pressure, it will make you immensely happy. You need to redirect the same strong emotion which is travelling on the path of hatred, destruction, death, anger and lust towards God. All love and attachment is a form of bhakti. Focus all your feelings and attachments now flowing in different directions towards God.

God is the centre of the universe. He can only be seen through the eyes of the heart. The heart is free from selfishness; it is the source of sacrifice and selflessness. You express your feelings through the heart. Love, devotion, hatred, jealousy, fear, passion, sacrifice and anger are feelings. You feel them; you do not see them. Similarly, you cannot see God. God has to be felt. Feeling makes you like a child, it is always pure. Childlike devotion is necessary for bhakti.

What is feeling? When you feel anxious and worried, you think about the same difficulty all the time. There is constant awareness. This awareness is in everyone. Bhavana is fully developed in every being. That is why you hate and why you love. The intellect is discerning, but bhavana is blind. A girl and boy fall in love. Each thinks the other is the only one in the world. Bhavana here is a limited concept. The flow of thoughts and feelings is limited to the object of emotion.

Bhavana is inward, not outward. You have to streamline your bhavana. Instead of directing it towards fear, anger and hatred, direct it towards God. When you can love Him as you would love your boyfriend or girlfriend, then God will be there. He will come immediately. Once you have begun to feel God in your heart, you will be the happiest person in the world. The only person who is happy in this life is the one who thinks of God, who lives in God, for whom the subject matter of life is God. In front is light, behind is light, to the right is light, to the left is light, everywhere is light.

Bhakti is the only sadhana path free of obstacles. Bhakti is inspired and sustained by God. It is attained only by the grace of God. It is His prasad. You come to bhakti by God's blessing. You love Him, you become attached to him only when and as He wishes. Therefore, when bhakti is His gift, His wish, how can there be an obstacle?







Relationship with God

The first step in the life of a bhakta is to discover your relationship with God. Just as you have a relationship with your mother, father, wife or husband, you also have a relationship with God. You will have to find your relationship for yourself. My relationship with God cannot be yours because my association with Him is purely personal, and yours too should be personal. This takes time, but once you have discovered it, your journey will be nearly complete, for then you will be very close to Him.

At Rikhia, I realized that I am a servant of God. Before that, I thought I was a *bhakta*, a devotee of God, before that a *jignasu sadhaka*, a spiritual seeker, and before that a *moksha sadhaka*, a seeker of liberation. But none of these relationships was as good as that of a servant. Find out what is most special about your attitude towards Him. My bhavana is that of a servant, *dasya bhava*. Throughout my life I always had the feeling somewhere in the depths of my heart that I was being guided. For twelve years I was the servant of my guru and then for twelve years I was the servant of my disciples, so I decided to establish the same relationship with God.

Once your mind becomes immersed in God, there will be an automatic metamorphosis. The moment I received the command, "Help your neighbours as I have helped you," the means to implement it also started flowing in. I did not have to do anything. I did not go from village to village or from door to door. It was God's command. I am the servant of God. I am not the doer. He is the doer. These are His orders and He will also implement them. I am neither a son, nor a father, nor a brother to anyone. I am simply the servant of God.

How can bhakti be developed? Everyone wants to love and to be loved. You don't have to learn how to love, but how to streamline this love from matter to spirit. To channel the love you have for the material world towards God, you have to forge a relationship with Him. First, you have to discover what your inner nature is, then what your bhavana is, then what the







manifest form of that bhavana is. Look for the most intense relationship you can feel so that your bhavana may merge quickly with Him.

Some people have affection, some have romantic love, some gentleness, others enmity. Is God your father, mother, husband, wife, child, boyfriend, girlfriend, friend or master? You have to be very clear. The relationship between you and God is very personal. My relationship with God is a direct relationship. It has nothing to do with my relationship with friends, disciples and devotees.

Without discovering your relationship with God, you will not be able to reach Him. It took me many years to be able



to do this. Finally, I realized that He is the master and I am the servant. Then the emotions began to grow and I began to feel my relationship. What is the feeling, attitude, philosophy, thought pattern, duties and limitations of a servant? He revealed it to me. Similarly, God will have to reveal to you your relationship with Him. If you say that you are the servant of God, but do not feel it in your heart, it is just lip service. Whatever connection or bond you want to establish with God, it must give rise to the corresponding feeling within your heart.

If we consider ourselves to be a servant of God, then all the qualities of the servant should be expressed in our attitude.

How does a servant think? How does a mother think? How does a daughter think? Everybody has a particular psychology. If we think of ourselves as the beloved of God, all the symptoms of a deep erotic relationship must arise in us so that we feel the pangs of separation intensely and we lose sleep over Him.

Realizing our relationship is the simplest way to feel His love. You may say that God is your father or God is your mother, but the best relationship of all is master and servant. That is our true relationship with Him. I am His servant and I shall carry out all His wishes. After establishing one's relationship with God, one races ahead with great speed in spiritual life.





Every Form is God's Form

For a bhakta, God is both transcendental and immanent. When He is transcendental, He is beyond the mind and senses, beyond name and form, beyond time, space and causality, beyond all limitations, beyond all things animate and inanimate. But when He is immanent, He is in everything, in a tree, in you, in me. He is all-pervading, all-permeating, from core to core. He is present in diverse forms from the most subtle to the most gross. He manifests in many forms. He pervades many forms, yet He is complete in Himself.

God is both *sakara*, with form, and *nirakara*, formless too. God is beyond everything, beyond time, space and matter, and

God is present in all beings. We have to accept both concepts of God, not just the transcendental. The immanent form of God is all embracing, all encompassing, total. Therefore, His love is not merely restricted to the transcendental aspect of divinity. His love is without boundaries. He loves everyone. When your mind is submerged in this attitude, you do not behold yourself or anyone. You behold only the glory, the magnificence, the brilliance.

The whole world is God's manifest form. We are all forms of God. He reveals Himself in different forms within each being, from the most ordinary to the most talented. God exists in many forms, from the microbe to the towering tree, from the limited mind to the universal mind. God is in the person who needs

your help, God is in the animal that needs your protection. In this universe there is no place or object or thing in which God is not present.

The best way to depict Him is to say that every form is His form. The entire universe is the manifestation of God. It is pervaded by one power. It is the essence of God that is important, not the name. Tulsidas says,

No difference exists between formless God and the God of form.

Thus speak the Vedas and Puranas, the munis and the wise.

The same formless, unseen, unborn and attributeless God

Takes the form created by the love of the devotee.



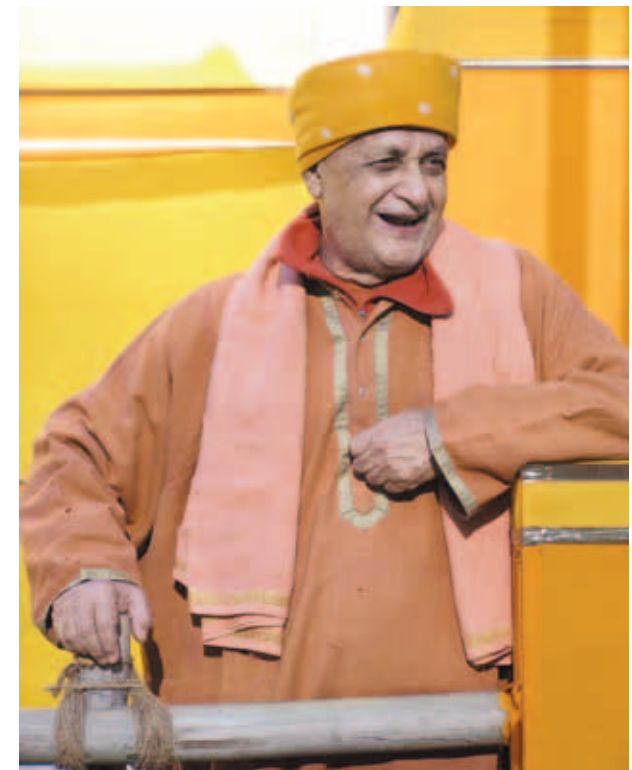
Kabir Das has also said,
The formless God is my father and the God of form my mother.
Whom to praise and whom to denounce?
Both sides of the scales are in equilibrium.

Cotton has no form, but a thread, a length of cloth, a shirt or trousers are all forms of cotton. Gold has no form but all the forms it takes are the form of gold. None of these forms is the one and only form. A form is everlasting and unchanging. Every form is His, whether it is Christ, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Guru, Krishna, Rama, Devi or Durga. Just as a light bulb, a microphone, light, cold and heat are all forms of electrical energy, every

form is a form of divine energy. Whatever you see in this world belongs to God. If electricity alone has so many forms, then God Almighty is bound to have millions.

One can worship God in any form one likes. All those around you who are suffering, unhappy and floundering in darkness are all different forms of God. You cannot ignore the form of God which is immanent and all pervading. You cannot just go running after the transcendental God.

If you want to realize God, try to also know the God who lives in every living being and also in non-living things. Only then can you know Him fully. Just knowing a part of Him



is not enough. You should know Him in all His forms. Your inner awakening can really take place one day. God is always with you. Nothing is difficult for Him, only He should be convinced that you are totally honest in whatever you are thinking and doing.

The immanent form of God is everywhere and in everything. If you serve a tree, the earth, a river, the atmosphere, you are serving God. If you help the needy, you are serving God. Realization of God must be a total experience, not a partial one. Just as the intense emotion of desire, hatred or aversion arises in your mind, in the same way the deep emotion of true love for God arises within. Not just for God, but for all humanity, because God has no form, yet every form is His form. There is nowhere in this universe where God is not!



Jewel of Faith

Faith in God is a glorious, wish-fulfilling jewel. If your heart is full of faith, your mind will always be radiant. Faith dispels ignorance like sunlight dispels clouds. Knowledge of God does not necessarily bring you closer or guarantee communion with Him, but faith does. If you can attain this jewel, all obstacles will disappear. *Shraddha* and *vishwas*, faith and belief or deep conviction, are inherent in everyone just as butter is dormant in milk and fire in wood. Just as the body is infused with prana, faith and bhakti are embedded in the human heart from birth. If faith and trust become solid and stable, they switch on God's power.

Faith is the basis of spiritual life. The main purpose of faith is to develop bhakti, even while living in the external, transient world. Faith and trust are necessary to develop an experience of God. You can develop these qualities by having good satsang, association with truth. The truth is God.

Faith needs to be awakened from within. The first inspirer of faith is the mother, the second is the *ishta devata* and the third is the guru. The mother is the first symbol of faith. Without faith in your mother, your faith can never deepen or develop.

The second basis of faith is the *ishta devata* or chosen deity. The devata is the one who lights up the darkness and reveals the hidden essence. There are

as many devatas as there are people. Some worship Vishnu, some Shiva, some Ganesha or Hanuman, Durga and Kali. You may not see your ishta devata or have any logical proof of its existence, but you still worship your chosen deity regularly.

The third basis of faith is the guru. Through faith in the guru one sees the reflection and splendour of God. If your faith in the guru is strong and unchallenged, then the guru becomes equal to God for you. One who has abiding faith in the ishta devata and the guru alike attains enlightenment. It is not difficult to have faith in the devatas who are regarded as superhuman godly beings, but it is difficult to have faith in the guru who is lives in a human body and is subject to the laws of *prakriti* or nature.

The guru is the ultimate test of one's faith. Your faith in the mother may be unshakeable, your faith in the ishta devata may never shatter, but your faith in the guru is vulnerable. The guru does not fit into any preconceived mould. You have to search for faith within the recesses of your heart and mind. A disciple with unwavering faith can even have darshan of God. The guru's place is thus considered to be the highest.

Faith is the *brahmastra*, the ultimate power of spiritual life. It turns the most mediocre person into a great person. Bhakti brings spontaneity into your life.



Even if you don't want to love God, you will love Him. Even if you don't want to surrender, you will have to. Even if you don't want anything from Him, He will give you everything. Faith in God brings spontaneous blessings.

God can be attained only through faith, trust and spiritual endeavour. God may be in the brain, heart or somewhere else, but you must feel, realize and experience Him. Merely talking about Him is not enough. Through intellect you learn about God, but through faith you experience God. Without faith and trust you cannot have divine experiences, even though He is close to you. There is no way other than faith and belief.

Faith does not change. The intellect changes, the brain changes, but faith is eternal. It comes with you and stays with you. Faith is impossible until the hard crust of the ego breaks. To break your hard-hearted ego, you have to worship God in His visible form. When the jewel of faith in God abides in your heart, there is no suffering. This jewel is manifest in the world, but cannot be found without the grace of God. Any creature who searches for Him with love finds the jewel. Firm faith in God is the reward of all spiritual efforts. But no matter what sadhana you do, ultimately, you have to seek the help of a saint. Whosoever bears this in mind finds devotion to God an easy attainment. It is the saints who bring this wisdom to people. The ultimate of life, of all our ambitions and convictions, should be faith.



Sing God's Name

A new consciousness is emerging, not only in India, but worldwide. It is naam *sankirtan*, singing the name of God. Swami Sivananda used to say, "God's name is the quickest, safest, cheapest, surest and best way to reach God." Singing God's name with devotion is the highest form of bhakti. In the twenty-first century people everywhere, irrespective of nationality, culture, colour or creed, will enjoy the bliss of kirtan on a family or community basis. In Kali Yuga, where the mind is easily distracted and confused, kirtan is the main sadhana.

Music has become universal. Sankirtan will be the yoga of the next generation. They will give music the form of prayer, kirtan and bhajan. Renowned musicians will sing kirtan, because the joy and ecstasy derived from devotional music cannot be found elsewhere. As a result the standard of music will improve and the spiritual path will become more accessible. Dance, music and sankirtan will dominate this century.

Satyam, truth, *shivam*, auspiciousness, and *sundaram*, beauty, represent your real nature, but they are hidden. To manifest them, you have to break the outer shell. Begin with the Lord's name, the mantra of wholeness and perfection. Repeat God's name before you go to sleep and when you wake up. Kirtan is the best way to be near God. When your heart is innocent and childlike, whatever you sing is blessed.

Singing God's name is a science that has been perfected in India over thousands of years. The pioneers of sankirtan were Mira Bai, Haridas and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The point of singing God's name is divine intoxication, divine ecstasy. Through kirtan you can reach the highest pinnacle of spiritual experience.

Music and dance are the elixir of life. Teach your children to devote more time to God and spiritual life. Children pick up sankirtan very quickly and enjoy it so much they forget about everything else. When their minds are clean slates, not yet conditioned by maya, that is the best time to mould them. Let kirtan bring you all together and knit the family into one unit of divine worship.



Kirtan and dancing purify the mind. When your heart is filled with joy, it dances and when the heart rejoices, the body also dances. The vibration of God's name influences all the gross and subtle aspects of creation. Always remember that God is never far from you. God's name is the way to resurrect the divinity within you. Music is God-given, natural and spontaneous. Naam sankirtan is the easiest way to worship God. An energy field is created and anyone who enters that field is touched by the energy from within. God's name is a very high potency dose.

Rama's name cleanses the heart and inner mind. It is a detergent which washes away all the dross of maya and worldly life. When the mind is gripped by the Lord rather than by worldly experience, your whole life is transformed, not only external life, but the inner life of thought, feeling, vibration and experience. Music affects the subconscious mind. It penetrates directly into the level of emotion, beyond reason, and affects

the atma. Add music and kirtan to your yoga sadhana. Just sing the name of God until your mind melts. To realize God and live a divine life, the only sadhana left is sankirtan.

When you sing, God sings too. When you feel good, He feels good. Sing with full devotion. This is the basis of receiving God's grace. I inaugurate and close the day with God's name. Anything begun well ends well. God's name is always sweet, whether you sing or chant it. It is a long-term investment.

The Ramacharitamans proclaims that one who sings God's name will have darshan of the Lord and attain liberation. The magic of kirtan is the means. The Lord has many names. If the same name is sung and repeated again and again in a variety of melodious ways, it becomes kirtan. In Kali Yuga the glory and power of kirtan is emphasized. When the mind is totally engrossed, when the atma and paramatma connect and unite, that is kirtan.

2004



Purpose of Life

Each one of us has a destiny that becomes the basis for all the pain and pleasure we have to undergo. We all strive for a happy, healthy and prosperous life, and yet fail to get it. Why? It proves that there was something beyond human effort, *purushartha*, which you may call destiny, *prarabdha karma*. Are our achievements the outcome of our destiny or our self-efforts? Spiritual life is dependent on God's grace, not our own efforts. The seers say when God's grace is received, *purushartha* is not necessary.

Destiny and *purushartha* are both useless in comparison with God's grace. To receive that grace requires complete faith in God. During the *yajna*, let your faith in God be so deep that you submerge yourself fully in Him in such a way that sorrow is transformed into happiness. Let there be some changes in your life to experience God's grace.

Divine grace is the ultimate answer to all our problems. To obtain divine grace is my reason for calling you to Rikhia. You imbibe the spirit of the *yajna* through your inner feelings, your spiritual and inner receptivity. This form of worship creates a movement in the etheric plane, in the plane of energy, a plane many of us have not reached. What you know about yourself is only the tip of the iceberg.

Submerge yourself in the name of God. Centre your mind on Him. The infinite *atma*, the infinite being that you are is still hidden from you. That is the tragedy of human beings. You do not know how to feel the presence of God. You are not even able to feel your own presence, because He is in you, not outside you. The omnipresent God is everywhere.

I was aware that God's presence can be experienced in the same way that we experience the spirit, or the presence of fear, animosity or lust. I tried to experience Him in different ways. I moved straight and also obliquely, spoke for hours about Him, wrote book after book, but the path leading to Him remained far away. Whichever path I trod, I found His door locked and



barred. But now I experience Him. Why I can't explain. When I experience His presence, He remains in my vision. The differentiation between Him and me is completely obliterated.

The experience of God is very precious. It is the ultimate truth of human life. Why does a human incarnate? To manifest the unmanifest God. Man has been given this body to realize the invisible God as a visible power. Humans and animals have the same basic instincts. The only difference is that we can experience God. Animals cannot discuss or understand God, although they live by the grace of God. We are aware of God. We are searching for Him. We have questions about Him. The *yajna* is the right opportunity to maintain this God consciousness as much as possible. You have to make the *sankalpa*, "God reveal yourself to me in any form you like."

Human beings can sing God's name, do *japa* and meditate on God. Only human beings can talk about God, listen to stories

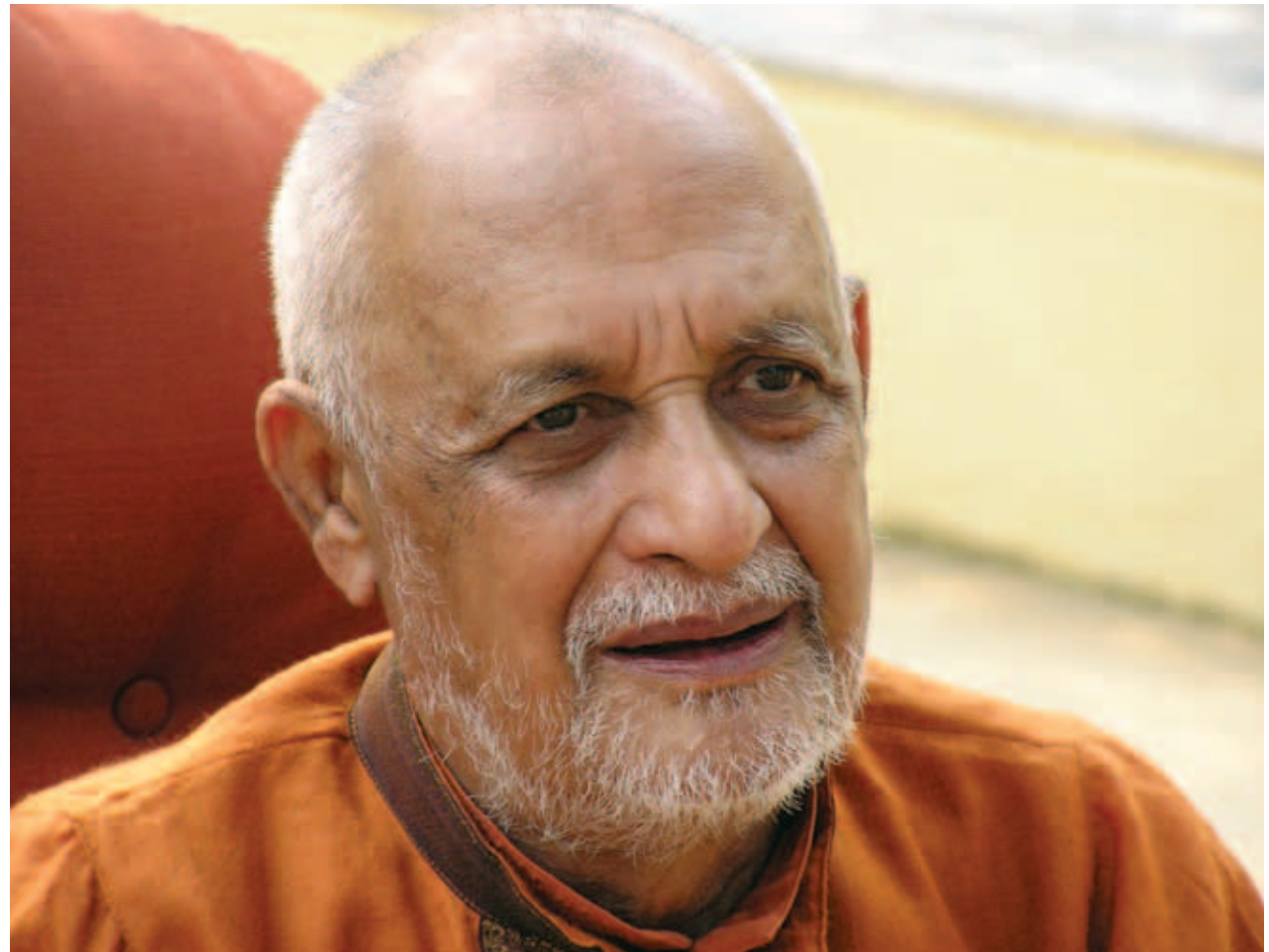
about God, think about God and offer their lives to God. This is the highest aim of human existence. If you misuse the life God gave you on sensory pleasures, you have to bear the fruits of your actions. Why waste this incarnation? Once you realize that the main purpose of life is divinity, the entire direction of the clock changes automatically. But your biggest concern is your family, not realizing God. Therefore, you are unable to deal with the mind or to make positive use of your life.

Human life has only one aim - God-realization. Eating, drinking, housing, family, marriage and career are not aims. The best way to achieve the aim of human life is to remember His name. Singing *kirtan* is the first way. The second way is helping others. Leave everything to God. God is the inspirer of every act. Ask God what He wants you to do and do it. Leave it to Him and He will do it. Try this trick and everything will change in your life.

Befriend the Mind

Dealing with the mind is the practical side of spiritual life. The mind should be your friend. Do not consider the mind to be a sinner. Do not fight with the mind. Take yourself to be an instrument. God is the real doer. The mind is a great force and you should never misbehave with it. You think that if you perform a particular action you will be guilty and have to face the consequences. Thus each one of you is set on the task of self-reformation. But when you try to turn and twist your nature, your personality becomes more problematical and more complex.

You may practise raja yoga, jnana yoga and bhakti yoga as much as you like, but they only pacify the mind for the time being. The only way to deal with the mind is to give it a proper duty that it likes, to dedicate it to the service of an ideal that will make it happy. The mind enjoys serving needy people, feeding the hungry, taking care of orphans, finding out the problems of others and offering help. Visit a hospital and do a little nursing, serve the sick, help the doctors, give some first aid. You will like it. You will feel light-hearted. You will see the transformation in the mind.



I tell the sannyasins to do a lot of karma yoga, to serve others selflessly. Go to the villages, visit door to door, serve the poor. Everything will change of its own accord. Until you consider the misery of others to be your own, you will never acquire control over the mind. It is not easy to conquer the mind. Whether you are young or old, rich or poor, capable or incapable, the mind can only be dealt with by a sattwic programming of dedication and self-sacrifice. If you try

to control your mind, ultimately you will fail. If you think along these lines, you can never have mental problems. I have never fought with my mind. My mind is my friend. Sometimes the mind makes a mistake. Sometimes the mind triumphs, sometimes I win. Sometimes the mind listens to me, sometimes I listen to the mind. It lives, thinks and works for me. We have made an arrangement. It says, "Swamiji, you are my guru, I am your disciple."



Everyone can attain an amicable relationship with the mind. However, you have already created an enemy of the mind. For you, the mind is a sinner, the source of all misery and vice, the origin of worry and anxiety, the storehouse of passion, anger and all the human weaknesses. You have to change this deep-seated misconception.

All the great people of the world have commanded their minds to perform wonderful feats, whether they were gurus, mahatmas, artists, scientists or men of letters such as Buddha, Mahavir, Gandhi, Newton or Einstein. The mind is a minute fraction of the unfathomable Brahman. Nobody should misbehave with it.

The mind has a weakness. If you think of the misfortune of others, the mind melts. It sloughs off its hard crust. Suppose you have ten or twenty thousand rupees and the thought comes to your

mind, let me help the poor with this money. If you actually do something to help the poor that day, your mind will feel very pleased and peaceful. If you want to befriend your mind, treat the whole world as your family and reach out to as many people as you can.

The day that mental agony and unhappiness completely come to an end and there is no sorrow left, you will begin to feel I am bliss, *ananda*, *satchidananda*. Neither happiness nor misery is my name. I am neither birth nor death. I am *chidananda roopa*. This is the state of sannyasa. It is a very high state of awareness, a different plane of human life. Many great souls have experienced this state and lived in it. When one reaches that stage, joy and sorrow, poverty and prosperity, hunger and satiation, cease to influence the mind.

Spiritual Life

The first, second and last purpose of my life has been to live a spiritual life. Ultimately, I realized that spiritual life lies within. Wherever you are, you can lead a spiritual life. In the future mankind will be in a better position to live a spiritual life, because the spiritual life we want to live and the answers we want to discover and understand will be more available to us. There will be many more gurus and spiritual teachers. People will have more time to devote to spiritual life.

The whole of human life is spiritual. To live in the world is a spiritual process, a sadhana in itself, whether you live like a devata, a sadhu or a devil. Whatever happens in life is part of spiritual life. Whatever happens within creation also takes place within the gambit of spiritual life. Nothing is excluded. Remaining in the world is a spiritual endeavour. Life is your school; the world is your university.

Householder life is your university. Husband and wife are two different faculties. Producing children is another faculty. Birth and death are experiences. You experience happiness and suffering, and in this way you learn about misery and sorrow. Then you try to distract the mind and find a diversion. This gets you nowhere. To get somewhere you have to look and walk within.

As long as you are in this human body, you cannot be free from the frailties of human life. You have to accept the reality and yourself as you are. If you start with morality, you will have psychological problems. Goodness cannot be imposed or cultivated. Goodness is your inner being which is completely hidden, and you can only break through the shell with God's name.





The spiritual journey begins with faults, because man has accumulated karmas from the past eighty-four lakh yonis, or 8,400,000 incarnations, through which he has evolved. The human journey begins with an incomplete nature. You can't fight with these things. Never be in a hurry regarding spiritual life. Spiritual life is not a matter of one life, just as education is not a matter of one year. Time is a relative factor. In spiritual life you should aim for long-term practice, not instant achievement. Go on practising and don't worry about what you will or won't get.

Spiritual life should not be a matter of ego: "I will meditate, I will speak the truth, I will observe brahmacharya." It is better to say, "God, tell me what to do, whether to meditate, serve the sick or enjoy life." Spiritual guidance has to come from God. Sometimes it comes, but you don't understand God's ways, God's clues. At that time you need a guru to decipher God's signals to you.

To experience spiritual life while living in the world, you should enlarge the scope of your sadhana from mere asana, pranayama, japa and meditation to





serving those who are in need. Personal peace is not the ultimate aim in life. As long as society is not peaceful, the world will not enjoy peace. Today there is so much pain and misery everywhere because God is not seen where He actually is, which is in the suffering. Therefore, your spiritual endeavour will fail. Finding peace of mind in the temples is not the ultimate in life.

You have to search for that peace which surpasses all understanding and which embraces every living creature. You have to search for God. You have to look for Him in the alleys, lanes and houses. Do not go empty-handed because the Lord may be hiding in any house. Take blankets with you, saris for the women, jeans or dhotis for the men, toys for the children and a few pots and pans. First take care of others, then take care of yourself. I tried hard to attain inner enlightenment, to see God, to liberate myself from *avidya*, ignorance, but I couldn't do it. Then I started helping my neighbours. After that I would always hear His voice.

You may certainly enjoy life and use your money to make yourself happy, but remember that the happiness you seek through sensual enjoyment is nothing but escapism, avoiding confrontation with reality. Even if yoga provides you with a means of enjoyment, ultimately it will not help you. Your joy must be to help people who have no joy. Your happiness should be giving and sharing with people who are unhappy. This is the central teaching of the Bible, of Christ and Saint Francis. It is also the central teaching of Buddha, Mahavir and Mahatma Gandhi. I am just re-echoing what they have said.





Path to God

There are many paths in spiritual life. The simplest and easiest path is to think a little about others. This is my own experience. My mind opened when I started living for others. As long as I was living for myself, I was blind. When I began to think about others, I started growing inwardly. God sent me to Rikhia. He told me to care for my neighbours as He had cared for me. I asked myself, "Satyananda, are you very selfish? Will you have God's darshan

all by yourself? How can the world benefit from the spiritual wisdom that you attain?" I said to God, "I am blind. Tell me what to do." Henceforward God began to show me the path. He said, "Give blankets to those who are fighting the cold." In this way, slowly the guidance came in clear terms.

Thinking about others is a sadhana in itself. You are all seekers. You come to Rikhia to find out what is beyond name and form, beyond



the senses and intellect. You come to find a path, a method, a technique. If you help your fellow beings even a little, God will most certainly shower His grace upon you. Use some of your strength, mind, heart and soul, money, knowledge, power and resources for others. Have at least some corner in your heart for those who are suffering. My entire focus now is on what I can do for those who are sad, destitute and helpless. What can you do for them? What can society do for them?

This is the easiest way to experience God. It is a very big sadhana. If you do not feel the pain and misery of others, then you only know how to talk about knowledge. The most important thing in life is having compassion, love and affection for others. The prana is softened. The divine light of God descends in meditation, dreams and the waking state.

Everyone who is searching for a reliable path will have to discover God and their relationship



with Him. Even if you love Him half-heartedly, you will receive His full grace. Helping others is the simplest and easiest path in Kali Yuga. One path is repeating the name of God and the second sadhana is doing good to others. These are the only two ways. Your mirror will begin to clean itself. One day you will see yourself very clearly and exclaim in realization, "Oh, I am Brahman." Worship and bhakti pave the way for oneness with God.



Sannyasa Today

The idea of sannyasa is finding a stronghold in the modern era. Increasing numbers of people are becoming sannyasins. In the past, people would take sannyasa after the age of sixty when they believed that their desires had finished, but now those aged eighteen to thirty come for sannyasa in large numbers. In the future many young men and women will come to the ashrams and work for the betterment of the rural area.

The twenty-first century will be a century of revolution. We are living in an age of comfort, affluence, possibility and freedom. All this will have an effect on the mind. When the mind has few material problems, it creates psychological problems. This will be a syndrome in both the West and the East. The only solution for the empty mind is to fill it with the search for God.

In the vedic period the age for sannyasa was seventy-five, when people had seen the world and *vairagya*, non-attachment, and *bhakti* were natural. However, sannyasa is such a *vritti* or tendency that it can manifest at any age. Therefore, thinkers in society advocated that the sannyasa tradition be open to everyone. When young people take sannyasa, however, they have to deal with desire and attachment. All ashrams from the times of Buddha, Mahavira and Shankaracharya have ruled that the first condition of sannyasa is to cut off the bonds of the world, *maya* and the mind. This cannot be done forcefully, and a young person in the sannyasa ashram first learns to cut off the ties.

Only one who can free the spirit from the bonds of society and desires may take to sannyasa life, which eliminates 99.99 percent of people. Sannyasa is not a job. If you want sannyasa, you will have to get rid of the old mind. After this elimination has taken place, aspirants stay in an ashram and help to run it. Some ashrams feed people all day, or run hospitals, schools, Sanskrit classes, and so on. Sannyasins are able to perform varied duties well because their mind is now in one place.

Sannyasins realize that they cannot evolve by living in the world. If your mind is running after family, promotion and legal cases, which mind will you give to God? There is only





one mind, whether you focus it on God or in the world. While living in the world, however, you can prepare for the day when vairagya awakens in you. To realize God you only have to know yourself. God is within. Grihastha ashrama, householder life, is the preparation for this realization, and sannyasa ashrama is the postgraduate stage. Nothing remains in sannyasa ashrama. Sannyasins must feel they are serving the Almighty.

Sannyasa is a very big tradition in India and it will remain that way because it is not dependent on the support of the government. The Dashnami tradition to which we belong is very strong. We build our own life. A sannyasin must always remain self-reliant and independent. Whether a sannyasin lives in a palace or hut, he should live like a recluse. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Anandamai Ma and others like Swami Sivananda were examples of such ideal sannyasins.



Duty of Sannyasins

A real sannyasin is a symbol of *tyaga*, renunciation and sacrifice for others. If you are a real sannyasin, then I bow my head to you. The basic spirit of sannyasa is trusteeship, not consumerism. A sannyasin lives for others. Nothing belongs to a sannyasin. He has no wife, no children, no household, no bank balance, no property. The basic spirit of sannyasa is *mamata*, no sense of ownership, no attachments whatsoever, no maya, no delusion, no mineness, no self-interest and no ignorance. When nothing belongs to me, there is knowledge.

All the material, intellectual, physical and spiritual resources of a sannyasin should be dedicated to the well-being of others. Sannyasins must be aware of their dharma, their duty. The

only duty of a sadhu, a saint or a sage is to protect dharma by incorporating it into his life. The dharma of a sannyasin is to live in self-imposed poverty, free from desire.

If a sannyasin meets just his own needs, then illness, worry and inauspiciousness will never touch him. A sannyasin should be free from wants. If he runs after desires, his life has the upheavals and unhappiness of a householder. The noblest ashrama is sannyasa, when a sannyasin lives like a real sannyasin.

The goal of sannyasa is not to find God, to seek deliverance or personal peace, but to work for the amelioration of human suffering. How can you find peace when the whole world is burning, where there are unhappy people everywhere? What are the sannyasins doing for them? A sannyasin has a

debt to society, a social obligation, which has to be repaid. Otherwise there is no salvation. This applies to all sannyasins, Indian or foreigner.

The role of sannyasins in society has changed. Institutions dedicated to welfare and development are very few. We have to depend on the government for education, defence and protection, water, grain, hospitals and many other things. Too much dependence on government leads to social maladies. We require institutions that can cater for the needs of society. Every society can ensure its own security and meet its own needs. This is a vision, a utopia, which may take concrete shape in the course of time.

Sannyasins will now have to dedicate themselves to the upliftment of society. Otherwise the deprived section of the community will destroy both the rulers and the sannyasins. Ashrams must be brought from the cities to the village panchayats. If each sadhu were to adopt one panchayat and put his heart and soul into the all round development of the area, the results would be seen in less than five years. Sannyasins are very resourceful members of this country. They have unlimited knowledge and learning, capacities and powers. Even today in India people have great faith and trust in the sannyasins. A sannyasin has a definite influence and must use it for people's welfare.

Sannyasins will have to shoulder the dual responsibility of educating people and keeping our ancient culture alive. Strong institutions have to be developed, not religious institutions, but homes for the destitute, hospitals for lepers, libraries, hospitals, colleges and other institutions for people's well-being. Sannyasins will have to widen their area of operation and shoulder the responsibility of the nation.

Every society has separate needs. Western society needs spiritual leaders, yoga and meditation. India needs schools and colleges, hospitals and gurukuls. I tell the sannyasins that our front has now changed. Our ancestors did not formulate the path of sannyasa for distributing practical commodities like rickshaws and thelas. Sannyasins were meant to guide people towards spirituality. However, the situation is now so grave that the sannyasins will have to start right from scratch.

Role of the Ashram

Ashrams are a very important part of the Indian psyche. No matter which religion has been prominent, the ashram tradition has continued uninterruptedly for thousands of years. Today millions of young men and women are attached to one ashram or another. For those suffering from hopelessness and despondency, both young and old, the ashrams are like hospices, and people stay until they find their path. A very small percentage stay on and live as sannyasins for life.

The millions of ashrams in India survive because it is natural for people to help them. If they see you are doing good work for society. An ashram runs on people's acceptance. If an institution is not serving society or is not run on ashram principles, let it die. Those who run ashrams should remember that a sannyasin has no private life, no private bank account or land. If I have to leave the ashram, I will leave with what's on me. That is how a sannyasin has to live.

One who runs an ashram should live like a celibate, free from worldly instincts. You have to create an atmosphere of peace and energy. The ashram has to be like a temple. This has been the tradition from the vedic period, and it should be maintained. You come to the ashram to experience the spiritual atmosphere. There should be an atmosphere of sattwic enjoyment, not dullness. When your enjoyment depends on your own self, *atmananda*, it is sattwic.

Certain rules must be observed in an ashram. The chief element is *shram*, to live like a labourer. Through shram, every part of the body, nadis, granthis and muscles, is cleansed. This is the merit of labour. I lived in my guru's ashram sixty years ago, Sri Rama lived in an ashram in Treta Yuga and Sri Krishna lived in an ashram in Dwapara Yuga. In all these places, one had to labour.

However long you stay in an ashram, get up early, help as much as you can and learn kirtan. Whenever you get the time, come again. The ashram does not belong to anyone. The ashram teaches just one thing: to observe decorum, to stay



within boundaries, not only in the ashram but also at home. Decorum is doing what is appropriate. Discipline determines decorum. *Anushasana* means to rule over oneself. It is the foundation of life, otherwise society would collapse.

Paramahansa Alakh Bara is a sannyasa ashrama, although not only sannyasins live there. In *grihastha* or householder ashrama, everyone lives according to their social background, but those instincts should not enter the ashram premises. All ashrams in India follow the rules of the gurukul tradition. People of all faiths and castes can come. If you come to the ashram, live by its rules. Whether you come for a health management course, sannyasa course, as a guest, detective or thief, you will have to observe the decorum of the ashram.

The time is coming when the ashrams in India will be filled to capacity. India will become a place of shelter and security for people from the West. A global market is being opened in India. When it is completely open, large numbers of brilliant young people will come. Their culture and mentality is changing. The ashram is the best place for foreigners to live; they find a detached community, an opportunity to do kirtan, bhajan and sadhana, work to do and food to eat. In the past, ashram rules were framed for Indian society, but now they need to be reframed for a global society. The rules in Paramahansa Alakh Bara are for a global society. The growth of society should now centre around the ashrams. The twenty-first century will be the century of sannyasins and ashrams. We can foresee this and you should all be ready for it.

2005



God is Infinite

There are many paths to salvation. God is not one. God is infinite, whole, absolute and indivisible. Infinity means,

Poornamadah poornamidam poornaat poornamudachyate poornasya poornamaadaaya poornamevaavashishyate.

That is full, this is full, and from that fullness emerges fullness. Poorna means whole, complete, fulfilled.

The formless God is infinite and the embodied form of God is also infinite. If you say that God is not formless, He is in an embodied form, you are not off the mark. Just as water, air, oxygen and light are present everywhere, so God is present everywhere. The whole universe is His form. I am His form, you are His form. This is reality.

God is both without form, *nirakara*, and with form, *sakara*. You have to choose between the formless God and the embodied God, and offer your obeisance to Him. You are absolutely free to exercise your preference for any form of God. Hanuman is not greater than Sri Rama, and Sri Rama is not superior to Hanuman. Devi is not superior to Sri Krishna, and Sri Krishna is not greater than Devi. The names may be different, but the ultimate truth is the same.

Sri Rama and Sri Krishna are the two most prominent and outstanding figures in Indian culture. They are remembered not because they are avatars of divinity, but because their lives have become examples to emulate. When Krishna was asked why he had incarnated on earth, he replied, "On earth I find people who can abuse me, who can love me, who can adore me, who can reject me. Suffering coexists with pleasure." Therefore, Indian thought has always seen God existing everywhere, in peace or in war, in happiness or in suffering.

We believe that God is everything. We are polytheistic. We believe in one God, but an infinite God. To give a set definition of God is monotheism, and in the long run a monotheistic philosophy brings disaster to society. That is why, although it is said there is only one Brahman, still we believe in Rama, Krishna, Devi, Durga, Hanuman and so on. To say that God is only this and nothing else is an intolerant definition of God. You have not seen Him and, therefore, He may be like this, or like this, or like this, *neti, neti, neti*.

Polytheism results in a tolerant and enduring society. It has a positive impact on a nation's politics, culture and civilization. Monotheism breeds intolerance. In monotheism there is only one God, but in polytheism there are many gods. Monotheistic religions say, "This is the only way." Polytheism says, "This is the way, that is also the way. Your way is also the way." When you have a set definition of religion, of God and of your culture and civilization, you are on the way to destruction. Sri Krishna said that God is in whichever form you pray to Him. God has many forms, not one form. He is in the sun, the moon, the sky, the earth, in water, on earth, on all sides, in the mountains, in fire, in the whole universe. Every shape and form is the Lord.

In India we have accepted polytheism with a far reaching and broad world vision. What I am teaching is not religion, but a system of society for humankind. God is indefinable. You cannot define Him as one. One is infinity. If God is one, then one plus one is two, but if God is infinity, that one plus one is equal to one, one minus one is equal to one – *poornamadah poornamidam*. That is the meaning.



Ramacharīṭamanas

Ramacharīṭamanas tells the story of Rama and Sita as narrated by Shiva to Parvati. I am a regular reader of Tulsidas' Ramacharīṭamanas. It is a commentary on faith and the most powerful tonic for generating bhakti. The book has stirred the souls of many millions of people in India and given a complete expression and new definition of Rama. Ramayana was composed by Valmiki, and Ramacharīṭamanas is a version of the story composed in Hindi dialect by Tulsidas.

After thoroughly studying the Vedas, Upanishads, Bible, Koran and many other spiritual books, I stopped my reading with Ramacharīṭamanas. This one book paved the way in my life. The greatest obstacle was that I knew too much about God. But He only remained within the precincts of my mind;



I couldn't go beyond. This book took me out of the gravitational force of mind and intellect, and now it is the only book I read. I like Ramacharīṭamanas as it narrates a plot, episode by episode. In between there is stress given to those parts which are unfathomable. I follow these and the truth is driven home to me, then I talk about it. I like the story line so much that I read it again and again.

The Bhagavad Gita contains knowledge, but the Ramacharīṭamanas has the sweetness of nectar. The biggest contribution it has made to my life has been to establish a concept of God with form. *Sakara* is the one who has a shape, a form, and *nirakara* is the formless one. God is everywhere, but I want a God who has a name and a form, so I enshrined Lord Raghunath in my room and He is mine. From Ramacharīṭamanas I learned that God is everywhere, but you have to hold Him in one place. I also learned that I may have a spark of divinity, but I am not the Divine. I may be a part of Him, but I cannot be Him.

In Ramacharīṭamanas the story of Rama is one thing and the war between Rama and Ravana is another. The story is the skeleton structure over which the teachings are delicately woven. The real instruction is about life. There are lessons on the philosophy of life, on relationships, how these relationships should be lived and how they become distorted. That is the speciality of Ramacharīṭamanas. Otherwise there are many picture books of Rama's story and other versions like Valmiki's Ramayana, Ananda Ramayana and Vikat Ramayana. There may be some differences in the stories, but the tradition remains unchanged.

Ramacharīṭamanas deals with life, its conflicts, frustrations and disappointments from birth to death. You cannot call it a religious book. Ramacharīṭamanas will give you a complete idea of the timetable of life. Life is a journey and you should have a timetable. The whole book, including Sita and Rama's wedding, Rama's exile, the abduction of Sita, the burning of Lanka, the killing of Ravana, reflect the spiritual journey of the *jivatma*, the individual soul, from bondage to liberation. The





Ramayana happens every day. Do not say that Rama never was; he is spiritual philosophy personified.

Most people first understand the esoteric meaning and then accept Sita and Rama. The second mentality is to first understand the personages of Sita and Rama and then turn to the underlying philosophy. The Indian village mind functions like this. A villager first understands Sita to be the daughter of Mithila, who was taken away by Ravana, the king of Lanka, who was killed by Rama. The uneducated villagers understand this in story form first and then go into the spiritual dimensions, thus experiencing both the exoteric and esoteric Ramayana. But their urban intellectual counterparts go about it by interpreting the symbolism before the human side of the story. The story becomes important for them only as a representation of a philosophy.

Make a resolve to chant at least one verse or *doha* daily. It will bring happiness and prosperity to your domestic life. You will receive the blessings of the saints and sages. Read it devoutly, profoundly and with understanding. The formless God becomes manifest in a recognizable form. Tulsidas has made this the theme of Ramacharitamanas. It is futile to concentrate on deciphering the inner meaning and explaining the symbolism behind all the characters. Instead, read the Ramacharitamanas as it is, feel and understand it as it is. If you apply your brain, God becomes still more elusive.

Rama should not be taken as allegorical or symbolic. Rama and Sita should be worshipped as a god and goddess. Go to God through your heart, not the intellect, and see him as Tulsidas has described him. Tulsidas had a pure heart and a clear head. He had the darshan of God. In the past I thought the Ramayana was symbolic. Now I think of Rama just as Tulsidas and Valmiki have presented him. A sadhaka should take Rama as a *sakara purusha*, a manifestation of God. What we should really care about is Rama's blessing and grace, having the good fortune of Rama's darshan in his beautiful human form and our faith in him becoming deeper and deeper. Sita's beautiful character should move our hearts and bring tears to our eyes. Our hearts should become softer and softer, and slowly we should merge in the formless.



Rama – Ideal Man

Sri Rama has been defined in various ways. One Rama is the son of Dasharatha, one Rama is the indweller of all beings, one Rama has created this world and one Rama is transcendental. I like the first Rama. I find the other forms impractical and too intellectual. I close my eyes and see Him as the blue-limbed, dusky-complexioned, son of King Dasharatha. My Sita is the Sita of Sitamarhi, found in the fields of Mithila.

Sri Rama was born in Treta Yuga. Rama and Sita were divinities who incarnated in human form. Rama was not an ordinary human. See him as the hero depicted in Ramacharitamans. Just grasp him simply with a pure and open heart. It is good to listen to stories about God and to talk about Him, because His stories inspire us, but when it comes to sadhana, you should be simple like a child.

Rama was a man of principle and Sita a woman of great courage. Rama was gentle, modest and self-controlled. Even with friends he would think carefully before speaking. This is a very great quality. He was so wise, yet still he had his own nature. Rama was born into a royal family with all its riches, but for twelve years he lived in the ashram of his guru, Vashishtha, where he slept on the floor, tended the cows and worked day and night. When he returned home, he was married to Sita. That was a very joyful part of his life. Then he was exiled to the forest for fourteen years. Sita was kidnapped by Ravana, and Rama had to organize an army and fight to get her back. When they both returned to Ayodhya after fourteen years, there were scandals, and ultimately Sita had to be abandoned.

Rama's entire life was one of tragedy, and from him we can learn how to fare in the face of difficulties. Christ's life was a tragedy, as was Sri Krishna's life. If these great men were avatars, why were their lives filled with tragedy? Without suffering nothing evolves. If they had avoided suffering, we would also try to avoid suffering. Pain, suffering and poverty purify the mind.



Some people say that Rama was just the hero of a poet's imagination. No wise person should pay heed to such statements. Not everything that we know has archaeological evidence. Knowledge of the past comes through stories, dances and traditions. To say that Rama is not an historical truth is akin to denying an entire culture. A figure who has been worshipped for millions of years cannot be dismissed. The object that gives you joy, the person who shows you the way, the figure that people can bring to mind without fear is always worth worshipping. Rama is not only my god, but also my ancestor. I was born in the Ikshvaku lineage in which Rama was born. He became my god later. To remember our ancestors is our dharma. Ancestry is a reality. You cannot deny this truth.



God's play is strange and cannot be understood by a human being. When God is born in a particular age, he is born for the people of that age. Rama was born for the people of his age. A hundred thousand years later, Krishna was born for the people of his age. If God is born today, he will be born in the computer age.

When the common man, the king, politicians, the army chief and the law and order systems are unable to do what society wants, an avatar of God is born to complete that work. God

assumes the form of an avatar in every age. Rama, who was my ancestor, was one of them. As a boy I worshipped Sri Rama as my hero. All children look for an ideal to emulate. I chose Rama as my model. I love everything about him and his extraordinary life: his self-control, poise, restraint and culture. Sri Rama is a model for humanity and everyone should emulate him. Society needs an ideal. Rama is the universal model. He is a model for everyone, everywhere.

Rama and Shiva

Ramacharitamanas has created a bond of love between the devotees of Shiva and the devotees of Rama. Before it was written there was bitter enmity between the two. Tulsidas has contrived it so that Shiva worships Rama and Rama worships Shiva. He has made them friends and mutual admirers, so that then their respective devotees also become friends.

Life without darshan of Lord Shiva is incomplete. He is always in natural attire, never ages, has no bed to sleep on and is unkempt. Shiva is just the opposite of his son, Ganesha, who eats good food and loves sweets. Shiva follows a path diametrically opposed to Ganesha. Therefore, serving Shiva means serving those people who are deprived, miserable and destitute. Yogis yearn for darshan of Shiva's five-headed and three-eyed form, but it is beyond their reach. However, we can see him embodied in suffering humanity. This is the possibility in Kali Yuga. Everyone who aspires for the experience of Lord Shiva should remember that he will be seen in a very decrepit form, in people who are poor, sick and helpless. It is easy to see God in a temple and everybody wants to do this, but it is hard to see God among the destitute. However, that is where you should seek Him.



I was born in the lineage of Ikshvaku, Rama's family line, so it is only natural that I have a special affinity for Sri Rama. I have been a devotee of Rama from childhood. At the time of initiation Swami Sivananda gave me the mantra Om Namah Shivaya and told me that Rama was my ishta devata. I sing Om Namah Shivaya every morning, meditating on a picture of Sri Rama seated on his throne in total bliss. I always aspired to have a glimpse of Rama, with bow and arrow, crown, beautiful clothes, and with Sita, the symbol of strength, righteousness and gentleness.

However, although Om Namah Shivaya is my mantra, I had never thought about having a glimpse of Shiva. I read in Ramacharitamanas that the word Rama is the shabda mantra which Lord Shiva gives initiation into. That Rama is not the denizen of Ayodhya, the indweller of the heart, the creator of the world or the transcendental Rama only. He is the total combination of all four Ramas. The purpose of chanting Rama's name is to materialize Lord Shiva. Shiva loves the name of Rama so much that he is certain to drop in wherever Rama's name is being chanted. Similarly, if you take up the name of Shiva, Rama is pleased.

Shiva was present when Rama was born. When Rama married, again Shiva made a point of being there. So when the wedding of Sita and Rama is taking place, there is every possibility of Shiva coming down in our midst. The marriage is to lure Shiva, because Rama is his ishta deva. Even if you cannot see him, it won't matter because he will definitely leave behind a trail of fragrant blessings

All human beings have cataracts, not only physical, but also inner. A cataract is an error in perception, *drishti dosha*. To remove this fault we have to undergo many sadhanas. When the error in perception is corrected, we can have realization. I became old doing japa, tapasya and anushthanas, but whatever I gained was only superficial. The real gain is to have darshan of Shiva. In Rikhia I underwent an eye operation. Now is the time



to see whether it has been a success or a failure. Only God will know. It does not matter if I have a blurred vision of Shankara. If he gives a radiant darshan that, too, is most welcome. Any form is welcome, as God does not appear in one particular form.

The path of experiencing, remembering and submerging oneself in God, of melting the mind in God, is the only path. Do not bother about the hard path, the razor's edge. Take the easiest and simplest path. It is very long and like the ant you go on walking slowly but steadily. In 1947, Swami Sivananda told me to wait for forty more years. He said, "Your time is yet to come. You have many karmas to finish." So I started walking slowly and steadily. Now I am almost there.



Krishna ~ God of Love

Sri Krishna was the avatar of love, the incarnation of celestial love on earth, an element that is missing everywhere today. At present we have everything, but we lack love. Love is that aspect of emotion where you think about others, not about yourself. Love is giving, not taking. Love is not an act. Love does not expect anything. Love is just sacrifice. It is total consecration of your emotions. Sri Krishna was the symbol of that aspect of life.

When he walked, it was love that walked, when he smiled, it was love that smiled and when he laughed, it was love that laughed. *Madhuradhipaterakhilam madhura* – “O God! You are nothing but sweet love.”



Krishna is the symbol of God with all His attributes. He lived as a man but he was a superman, a perfect man, a *poorna purusha*. He incarnated many thousands of years ago at the end of the cycle of Dwapara Yuga in order to destroy evil and restore righteousness. Before he was even conceived, he was on the hit list of Kamsa, who was his uncle and the king of Mathura. Although he was born into a royal family, his actual birth took place in a prison in Mathura. As a newborn he was smuggled to Gokul where he lived incognito for many years.

Prior to Krishna's birth, atrocities were being committed in the world. When the people prayed for relief from suffering, their prayers were heard. When prayers from the heart reach God, He manifests in a human form. Krishna destroyed the demons and lived in a playful way, sometimes stealing butter, sometimes duping people, sometimes teasing, sometimes dancing with the gopis and becoming their heartthrob.

Sri Krishna has brought life to philosophy and religion so that we can also smile. There is only one culture and civilization in this world where the gods dance, sing and play with the gopis, where they playfully steal and participate in wars and at the same time give enlightenment. Where will you find such a civilization, except in India! We still long to see such a man as Krishna descend to earth. Krishna was a great teacher. The love between Radha and Krishna was like that of the individual soul and the cosmic soul, like prakriti and purusha. He behaved like her disciple.

Sri Krishna was an incarnation of God, not an ordinary child. He took birth to teach the other children. Sri Krishna led a very natural life. He was a good child, a great child, a powerful child, a philosopher, a god, a friend and a warrior. At the same time he loved all the girls of his time. The gopis did not marry because Krishna loved them all.

The story is told in the Srimad Bhagavatam. It is also told in the Krishnavatar series, where Krishna is a child full of divinity. The story is told with sweetness, with melody, in a way that we can understand. It is one of the best stories about God. God must become the subject matter of stories, music, dance, discussion and dialogue. God is not beyond the mind. God is just here.



You should have a relationship with God in such a way that you can understand Him, just as you understand your son, your father, your brother or anyone else. If you start with the hypothesis that God is unknowable, it is a problem. God is knowable. Once you are told that God cannot be realized, you think that is final. Close your books and start from where you

can feel Him. The love you express for your child is a glimpse of God.

Krishna has many followers throughout the world. He was a playboy, a philosopher, an orator, a yogi, a fighter and a saint. He is the epitome of beauty, grace, love and dynamism. He is also the indweller of all hearts, especially in this modern age.



Cosmic Dance ~ Rasalila

The cosmic dance of *purusha*, pure consciousness, and *prakriti*, manifest energy, is eternal. It is a replica of the dance of Sri Krishna and the gopis. The gopis of Vrindavan were milkmaids and Krishna's devotees. As a child Krishna used to dance and dance, and the gopi girls used to dance and dance. That dance has become immortal in Indian history and is called *maharasa* or *rasalila*. In modern western terminology it is called the cosmic dance. We call it the dance of *purusha* and *prakriti*, the dance between *ida* and *pingala*. It has many names. Sri Krishna danced and the *rasalila* has become immortal. The eternal bliss that you experience in the Lord's *rasalila* is indescribable.

Krishna's dance with the gopis on full moon night shows explicitly that through such devotional dance and song, one can experience the presence of the Lord and become completely lost in Him.

The cosmic dance is *purusha* and all of *prakriti* dancing. *Purusha* is in the centre and *prakriti* is all around him. *Prakriti* and *purusha* are the two factors behind the entire cosmos, creation, sustenance and dissolution. Both are eternal. Once *prakriti* and *purusha* dance together, life springs into action and there is the spring of life. It is so in physical life, spiritual life, mental life and also in the psychological arena of life. There has to be a coming together of the two diametrically opposed forces. *Prakriti* is evolving, transforming, but *purusha* is not.

In this cosmic dance the principles of the entire universe come together. At the same time, the *maharasa* can also be understood in the form of yogic experience. Spirit and matter, *purusha* and *prakriti*, are not necessarily physical, physiological or material, they are also in the spiritual field. That is why they talk about the *purusha* in *sahasrara*; the *kundalini*, the *shakti*, in *mooladhara*; the five elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth; the twin forces of the sun and moon, *ida* and *pingala*; and the 72,000 *nadis* through which *kundalini* goes in the process of awakening. That is also *maharasa*, the cosmic play.

This cosmic experience has been explained in the vedic system in many ways. In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna asks Krishna to reveal his cosmic form. Krishna tells Arjuna, "As you are

unable to behold me with your own eyes, I will give you divine vision to behold my divine power. " Then Krishna showed Arjuna his divine form.

The cosmic dance is not an ordinary event. The dance of Radha and Krishna with the gopis is eternal, universal and ever present. Even while I am speaking, in every iota of this universe, material, mental and spiritual, and maybe something else too, is dancing. Nuclear scientists say that atoms, molecules and electrons are dancing all the time. This dance is the bedrock of creation. Speech, action, feeling, experience, creation and dissolution of each and every aspect of matter is nothing but a play. We have heard all that, but we are growing beyond the atom. The atom is one stage of matter, not ultimate matter. Although the literal meaning of the word atom is indivisible, the atom is divisible, it can be divided.

Beyond matter there is mind, beyond mind there is self. Beyond the senses or *indriyas* is the mind, beyond the mind is intellect, *buddhi*, beyond buddhi is the self and beyond the self there is the existence of something which has no form. Therefore, we are dealing with a very intricate subject; it is all a matter of personal experience.

Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita that earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego are his eightfold companions, prakritis. These eight prakritis are the lower forms of the manifest nature. There is one more prakriti, *para prakriti*, which is Radha. There is an unmanifest nature, *param buddhi*, beyond intellect. She is my transcendental companion and she represents Radha. The companions are the eight lower prakritis, and Krishna is the purusha who is the root of everything that exists.

In the spiritual realm maharasa, the cosmic dance, is the process of yoga where everything dissolves into one purusha, into one supreme self, one great spirit. The gopis lost themselves and became one with the form of Krishna. When he played







his flute, the gopis thought he was calling them. They went running after him in the middle of the night, on Sharad Poornima. Krishna asked why they had come and tried to discourage them, but they were determined. They said, "No, you are our sole refuge. You are our centre and you are the goal of life." Krishna had no answer, and ultimately the cosmic dance took place.

2006



God's Grace

Divine grace is the ultimate answer to all our problems. You feel the presence of your friends, children, pain, worries and problems all the time, but you do not know how to feel the presence of God. Swami Sivananda used to sing,

In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Rama.

In the heart, mind, prana and senses is Rama.

In the breath, blood, nerves and brain is Rama.

In sentiment, thought, word and action is Rama.

Within is Rama, without is Rama, in front is Rama.

Above is Rama, below is Rama, behind is Rama.

To the right is Rama, to the left is Rama,

Everywhere is Rama.

God's home is within your heart. However, God finds it painful to live in a heart that is dirty, so Ganesha, Rama and Christ live in Rikhia and shower abundant grace upon us. When there is grace, the lame are able to climb mountains, the mute begin to speak and the blind begin to see. I was born into a farmer's family, but I was able to spread yoga around the world. Once the grace of God descends, iron turns into gold and coal into diamonds.

To receive God's grace, however, His home should be kept clean. To make God dwell in your heart and to ensure He remains there, it is essential to clean your heart. You can tell what kind of a heart you have by the people you attract. The heart is about feelings and the mind is about thoughts. If your heart is pure, your thoughts will be positive, free from jealousy, greed, lust, anger, vengeance, worry, fear and insecurity. Your heart and feelings make you a good person, not your thoughts. Feeling, not the mind, is the basis of bhakti too.

Bhakti cannot exist without emotion, just as anger, fear, jealousy, worry, joy and sorrow cannot exist without emotion. To experience bhakti, however, you have to change the course of the river of desires. Emotions flow within us like a river. We do not see this river, but we feel it. The emotion which generates anger, passion and jealousy can be made to change its course. You cannot experience anger





and bhakti at the same time. To achieve grace there needs to be a complete change of course. My guru changed the entire direction of my emotions and life. It was God's will. God goes with those who have sublimated their emotions and cleansed their heart.

When the heart has become pure, God will live in it. You will then find that your destiny, the very direction of your life rests in the hands of God. If you completely surrender to God, nothing is impossible, but do not put conditions on the act of surrender. God is omniscient; He controls your mind, prana, limbs, your



life and death. He has given sorrow, joy, wealth, poverty and illness. He is present everywhere. He knows everything. He can do anything. In principle you accept this, yet you doubt Him. If you truly believe that He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, you would leave everything up to Him.

God is tied to you by the thread of love. Love is union between two opposite poles. Every object has a positive and a negative pole, known as space and time. When they move towards each other, they merge in the nucleus. The union achieved in dhyana or in worship of the Divine is

also between two opposite elements, purusha and prakriti, paramatma and jivatma.

We often refer to the union of the material and the spiritual, the mind and the spirit. The mind and its thoughts are material gross entities. The supreme spirit is a transcendental and omnipresent principle. It exists everywhere at all times. You may try to raise the level of the mind through mantra, make it subtler, internalize it, but it is a material object. The merger of that material object with the supreme spirit is yoga, union between two opposite elements. This is the meaning of love too.

Finding the Path

Our home is the abode of God. This world is not our permanent abode. In 1923 I came on a visit to this foreign land, and after completing it I will return to my original home. All the four places where I have lived have been full of blessings. My ancestral home where I was born and brought up, my guru's ashram in Rishikesh, the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger, and the Paramahansa Alakh Bara in Rikhia have all been auspicious, full of grace and revelation. That is proof of God's benign hand.

My life has been a laboratory. In 1942 I encountered a tantric yogini. At that time I had no knowledge of guru and disciple, and no desire to be a sannyasin. However, she gave me transcendental experiences, and after six months she transmitted her spiritual energy to me, which she called *anugraha*, grace. When I asked her to become my guru, she said she had given me a glimpse of the transcendental, but now I would have to develop to such an extent that the

experience would come from within me as a result of my own spiritual attainment.

You believe that the guru will touch you and the light will shine forth, but you have to qualify for it. Only then will the guru give you a glimpse to show you exactly what you have to attain. The inner space is uncharted. You could have millions of experiences, but someone has to give it to you, and the yogini gave it to me. She said, "Now you have to attain it for yourself." She told me to find a guru and prepare the ground. My spiritual journey began from that time.

I had never thought about sannyasa and there had never been any thought in my mind about guru until then. I did not know if a guru was a teacher, a master, a companion or a magician. I left my home in search of a guru and after groping around this blind fellow found his guru in Rishikesh. My guru showed me the way. I am still a traveller, but now I am close to the destination.







Guru Seva

I spent twelve years in my guru's ashram from 1943 to 1955. It was a hard life, but the only mission was to serve my guru. This service opened the doors to my fortune. The guru-disciple relationship is a relationship of love. In the material world the basis of love is human life whereas here the basis of love is spiritual life. It is called bhakti. Here two souls unite, and through such spiritual union the child of wisdom is born.

I asked Swami Sivananda many questions about my experiences and about spiritual life. He only said, "You have to clean your mirror first. The base should be ready. It is no use doing all kinds of sadhana when you are blind. It is not



possible to see the reality with your physical eyes. Do karma yoga and the light will shine from within."

You cannot move ahead or become a real disciple until you have spiritual maturity. I said, "If I have to work, let me go home then." He said, "No, once you go back, you will get stuck. It is better to work in the ashram tirelessly. Do everything for me." For twelve years, I toiled very hard in the ashram. There was nothing I did not do. As a result I acquired a lot of self-confidence, which was God's grace. Working without remuneration gave me an advantage because such work yields good fruit, never bad. Service of guru is *nishkama karma*, selfless work. I grasped this trick and continued it until 1987.

Trust God, have faith in God. It means living in the present. In 1947, Swami Sivananda told me, "You have come to the railway station three hours ahead of time, because the train will not arrive for three hours. Although you have purchased your ticket, the train will not come rushing in before its due time. You may be ready, but the train is not. You will have to pass the time somehow." When I asked him how long I would have to wait, he replied, "Forty years."

I am the product of my guru, not of my parents. My body may be a genetic transfer from my parents, but my spirituality

is not. I had no saintly qualities. It is only by the grace of my guru that I gradually became softer and softer. I was an angry young man, foolish and impatient. He was calm, enlightened, patient and generous, nothing but mercy and compassion. You must find a guru who can be your complement. My raw material was suitable for creating a good statue of a sannyasin, so my guru carved it. He taught me how to shoot the arrow straight at the target. Without the guru, knowledge is not realized. The guru is light himself.

My guru gave me sannyasa only when the time was ripe. In 1947 I was in Lahore when the partition of India took place. I need not elaborate on the devastation and inhumanity I witnessed everywhere. My outlook on life took a complete turnabout. I lost faith, condemned the saints and seers, denounced religion and dispensed with God. What can I tell you about God's ways? Swami Sivananda's birthday fell on September 8th and many of us were due to take sannyasa, but I refused. However, Swami Sivananda succeeded in convincing me otherwise, and on the 12th I took sannyasa.

Swami Sivananda opened up certain experiences of consciousness in me which continue to develop. In 1955, he said, "Satyananda, you have worked hard for the Divine Life Society, now you are free to go." He gave me one hundred and eight rupees and said, "You have to do nothing but add zeros to the right side!" He taught me kriya yoga in five minutes through which he said awakening would take place. It became the medium for the shakti he transferred to me. At the same time he forbade me from practising it. The reason is simple. When you drink poison, you don't lick your lips afterwards. When the downloading happened, a different vision started to develop and evolve in me.

Swami Sivananda was a simple, devout, kind and compassionate man. He never cared for money, and I also acquired the same temperament. I always thought that life is to be lived, to be enjoyed. It is bliss. The whole world belongs to me. It also means that I belong to the entire world. In 1964 I established the ashram in Munger. However, I always realized that this work could not be for myself, so I did it for my guru. It is not for me, not for my enjoyment, name, fame or glory. Dedicating the karma to my guru became a strong force in my mind.



A Prayer and a Promise

Only twice have I asked God for help, once in 1963 and again in 1989. Swami Sivananda had told me to spread the message of yoga throughout the world and give it a scientific outlook. Due to his grace I was able to do so. I was made an instrument by a divine power. From 1956 to 1963 I travelled throughout the Asian subcontinent as a *parivrajaka*, a wandering sannyasin. I realized how difficult it was to enter into competition with god men. I finally accepted defeat. In December 1963 I went to Trayambakeshwar, the seat of my ishta devata, Lord Shiva in the form of Mrityunjaya. I said, "Lord, I cannot fulfil the mission my guru gave me without your help. I will work with whatever inspiration you may give me for twenty years, after which I will renounce everything and come to you." I made this one promise and prayer to Him.

He heard me and fulfilled my request. From 1964, I toured the world like a whirlwind, because he was speaking, writing and teaching through me. I became ensnared for a quarter of a century as a result of that one prayer. By 1983 I had the ashram of my dream. The system of yoga I had developed had gained universal acceptance and recognition. But the period of twenty years had elapsed and I was violating the promise I had made.

I went to Trayambakeshwar to have darshan of my ishta devata. At once I was reminded of the solemn vow I had made. When you are in front of God, you soon realize your mistakes. Then divine grace comes. Why did I forget the promise I had made to God? Maya held me in her sway because success is also an illusion. Success gives birth to intoxication and you forget the commitment, if any, you have made. When I was reminded of the commitment, I finally resolved to bid farewell to Munger.



Prayers are made on the basis of faith. There must be no doubt in your mind. They must also be kept secret and protected. A prayer is a seed, a *sankalpa*, a resolve, arising from the mind. Bury the seed in the soil of your mind and then forget about it totally. In 1963, in Trayambakeshwar, I sowed that seed so deep that I forgot about it. When you make a wish, you must also promise to renounce something. God made me victorious globally and I had promised to return that to Him. You must also give something in return because your destiny is fixed. This is the law of karma. Everyone has to follow these laws, whether Rama, Krishna or Satyananda. There had been no obstacles in the development of my mission, because whoever is blessed by God is a king. However, you will only receive what you are destined for, and I was given whatever was in my destiny.



Leave Everything to God

The most precious thing mankind needs today is God's grace. Happiness, sorrow, disease and poverty are all part of life. Grace is different. All the saints had to face suffering and they accepted it. Whenever the Lord's grace is present, there is always happiness and peace. That is why our rishis and munis found the way to obtain grace.

Finding the right sadhana is not like getting a job, starting a business and earning money. You may want to practise sadhana and achieve something, but spiritual life is entirely dependent on God's grace, not on personal effort. You can keep on practising yoga, but nothing will bring you close to God except His grace.

I realized we are dependent on grace after practising spiritual life for many years. I tried everything possible. On January 19th 1983, I resigned from the institution. In August 1988, my mission being fulfilled, I left the work, responsibilities, friends, disciples, money, everything that I could consider my accomplishments. I went to practically all the *siddha teerthas* or holy places in India. On July 14th 1989, I returned to Trayambakeshwar. I surrendered and laid down my arms like a defeated soldier, but I wanted amnesty from God.

Again I spoke to Lord Mrityunjaya, my ishta deva. I said, "What am I to do now? I have nothing to do with yoga or preaching any more. I am a sannyasin, a free bird. I have no more missions to perform. I came to you in 1963 with a request. You fulfilled it. I gave you a promise and I am fulfilling it at last. Now tell me what to do and hereafter I promise to do only what you tell me.







That night a deadly storm raged within me. A voice pronounced, "Twenty-one thousand six hundred." The instruction was clear. It meant I was to do continuous japa twenty-four hours a day, fifteen rounds per minute, nine hundred per hour, 21,600 per day. I made a decision, "Satyananda, you are not operating on your own. You know many things, but now do only what God says." I made this final decision.

Everything happens according to its own destiny. At Trayambakeshwar I faced the problem of where to stay. On September 8th, 1989, Swami Sivananda's birthday, the voice came again, saying, "Chitabhoomi," which means cremation ground. In India, mythologically and historically, there are two cremation grounds, Shiva's *smashanbhoomi* in Benares, and Sati's *chitabhoomi* in Deoghar. I saw everything as clearly as on a television screen. I described the vision to Swami Satsangi. She went to Rikhia on the 9th and on the 10th she was shown this land. The title was struck on the 12th, and on the 14th the property was purchased. On the 21st I came to Rikhia.

To know exactly what God means, you have to ask Him. You have to pray to Him, "God, show me the path and be kind enough to lead me on to it. I have no mental, physical or moral strength. I am nothing, you are everything. I am a car without a driver, a chariot without a charioteer." This is the only way. It is God who guides me. He has guided me from childhood.

On January 14th 1990, I made a sankalpa to do 10,800,000 rounds of japa. It took me three

hundred days. At the end, the voice came again, "Take care of your neighbours as I have taken care of you." It is practically the same as Christ's message of "Love thy neighbour." After coming to Rikhia I discovered my relationship with God. Now whatever I do is God's commandment.

When you leave everything to God, you will have great joy and satisfaction. You were born through the grace of God. You live by the grace of God. It is by the grace of God that you start thinking about spiritual life. It is through the grace of God that things happen in your life, both good and bad. Whatever happens is His prasada.

We want from God what we want, not what He wants. That is why everybody is unhappy. Suffering is the salt of life. That is why the saints suffered. Christ suffered throughout his life. So did Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. These prophets with miraculous powers did not change their destinies. Suffering is the crucible into which nature throws a man whenever she wishes to mould him into a sublime superman.

Only when you enter the furnace can you become gold. Sorrow and suffering are my friends, not my enemies. Happiness comes to destroy me. I am telling you this from the depths of my heart. All spiritual seekers must understand that God is the source, the only support. If He wants you to do sadhana, do it. If He wants you to enjoy life, enjoy it. If He wants you to suffer, suffer. Become His servant. A servant has no choice. This is the purpose of the human incarnation.





Atonement

After coming to Rikhia I received the divine command that sannyasins must do penance to atone for past deeds. So I undertook Panchagni, the sadhana of the five fires, a very rigorous penance undertaken to wash off the karma collected during a sannyasin's mission phase. In Munger the wheel of karma was set in motion with great momentum. To become stained with soot was inevitable. Panchagni is meant either for one who is beyond all cares and concerns, or a *rajarishi*, a royal rishi.

For six months, from January 14th to July 16th, morning till evening, I would sit surrounded by four fires in four directions, the fifth fire being the sun overhead. I faced the heat for five years. I chose Tulsi as the presiding deity of the Akhara and prayed to her daily for sound health, and she kept me in perfect health.

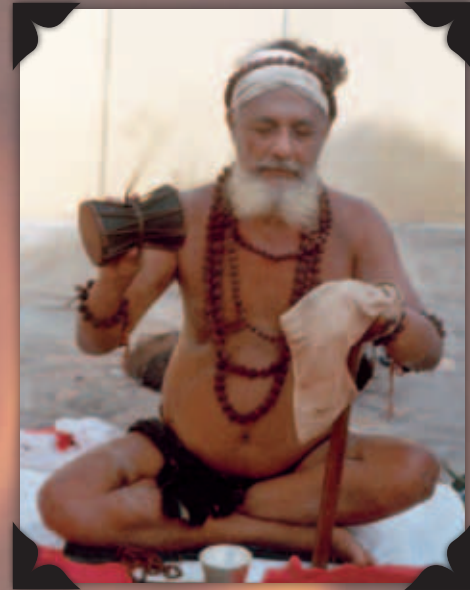
This only happens by the grace of God. The five internal fires are *kama*, lust, *krodha*, anger, *lobha*, greed, *mada*, arrogance, and *moha*, delusion. These five fires inside the subtle body dry up the being of a person. Only one who can face the five inner fires can face the five external fires. Otherwise a sadhaka doing Panchagni sadhana is sure to die. I did it for five years. Now I sit in bliss.

As the culmination of my Panchagni sadhana, I undertook an anushthana of 10,800,000 repetitions of the mantra of my ishta devata. It was done without any personal desire or resolve, without any expectation or demand. It was done for its own sake, as an obligatory act, that being a reward in itself.

After coming to Rikhia, my cataracted vision was corrected. Slowly all the unnecessary things, the intellectual knowledge and academic information, began to drop away. Life became simpler. My mind became totally and singularly absorbed only in Ramacharitamana.

Now I make no prayers to God because He knows what I need. I do not need anything. I do not have to run an institution. I have no dreams, no ambitions. I am God's servant. God has asked me to do the work that is being done in the villages of Rikhia, so I am doing it. He provides me with the means, and as long as He asks me, as long as I live, I will do it. When God wants it to happen, it will. I am only the medium, the agent. Swami Satyananda is a servant. I did whatever God inspired me to, and that inspiration came from my innermost being, not from my mind. I heard the voice with my own ears. God told me what to do, and I did it.







Sankalpa

I have lived a spiritual life for more than sixty years. I have practised every form of yoga, but ultimately I found that when I began to think about others, God began to think about me. On my guru's instructions, I lit the flame of yoga in Munger and the light of seva in Rikhia. This is the requirement of humanity today. Everyone has an inner desire, but you feel helpless because you do not know how or where to fulfil it. The divine power which is invoked through yajna, mantra and God's name has the potential to fulfil the desires of every human being. Anyone can come and be in the company of God.

Always remember that God is never far from you. God should be dearer to you than the dearest. You do not have to give up anything for God. Godliness is lying dormant within

us, but it is almost dead. If you want to resurrect the divinity within you, repeat God's name and do good to others. This is the only way in which you will become free.

Spiritual knowledge should be experienced directly, not through the medium of intellect or by analysis. You should approach spiritual knowledge very innocently, which is what I did. Initially I approached spiritual life through the mind. For fifty years I wandered and worked very hard. Finally, after teaching yoga and Vedanta, talking about the absolute self and expansion of mind, in the Paramahansa Alakh Bara I began worshipping Tulsi twice a day. I worship Devi, Ganesha, Rama, Lakshman, Sita and Hanuman. I worship the peepal and rudraksha trees.

God said, "If you want a return ticket, you will have to pay double fare." I replied, "I will pay not only double but even triple the cost." That is why I sat surrounded by fires for five years. God told me to read Ramacharitamans non-stop for twenty-four hours. I said to God, "I can go on for a whole year if you say so. Whatever you command me to do I will do, but I must have a return ticket." A return ticket is given either to those who are steeped in sin and whose karma is full to the brim, or those who volunteer to come back of their own sweet will.

When I leave my body, I will choose to be born from the womb of a mother who is of a very inferior caste. I will teach dharma to my father and mother as well as the labourers and sweepers who live around me, so that they can also inculcate





good samskaras. This is the concept of Bodhisattwa. As a Bodhisattwa, Lord Buddha took birth in many incarnations in the families of animals and low caste people. He also took birth in the houses of a businessman, a minister and a king, and everywhere he taught dharma. Sadhus and mahatmas should have this ideal.

Let me live with the poor, the downtrodden and the illiterate. If I can live in a small hut, have a family and children, face the pleasures and pains of life and yet still live like a sadhu while moving in the cycle of worldliness, then that is something. Namdev lived like this and he became immortal.

If you attain peace, what does it matter to the rest of the world? Only you are happy. It is better not to have peace when there is misery all around me. I want to take birth life after life, again and again. I don't want a kingdom, pleasures and comforts, freedom from the cycle of birth and death. I just want to be able to help people who are in distress – not only mental or physical distress, but the practical distress which lies in your kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, if you have those amenities. Millions of people all over the world are suffering. My neighbours are suffering, but nobody thinks about this.



The Rikhia ashram is now called Rikhiapeeth. *Peeth* means 'seat', an apt term for Rikhia as the instructions given by Swami Sivananda have culminated and fructified here. Swami Satyasangananda is the first *peethadishwari*, or acharya, of Rikhiapeeth and has been given the sankalpa that the three cardinal teachings of Swami Sivananda will be practised and lived here. This is the future vision for Rikhia.

Rikhiapeeth will have a spiritual tone, and at its centre will be the masses. The poor are the salt of the earth. Eighty percent of India is poor, and they make up eighty percent of Rikhia panchayat too. We have to do something to raise their standard of living. Unless you are able to bring happiness to each and every person, your philosophy is a farce, it is meaningless. The

responsibility of religion is to help mankind, but it has failed to do so. Religions have to come to man's rescue, not create more problems. Peace, *shanti*, and non-violence, *ahimsa*, should be the aim and purpose of religion.

I received three instructions from my guru, Swami Sivananda - serve, love, give. These precepts became the sadhana to be perfected in my life, and took a definite form when I came to Rikhia. To help others grow and become better in all respects, external and internal, social and personal, is my sankalpa. Whatever methods I have adopted over the years, whether yoga or the activities in Rikhia, were only a means to fulfil this sankalpa. Everyone must learn to live for others.



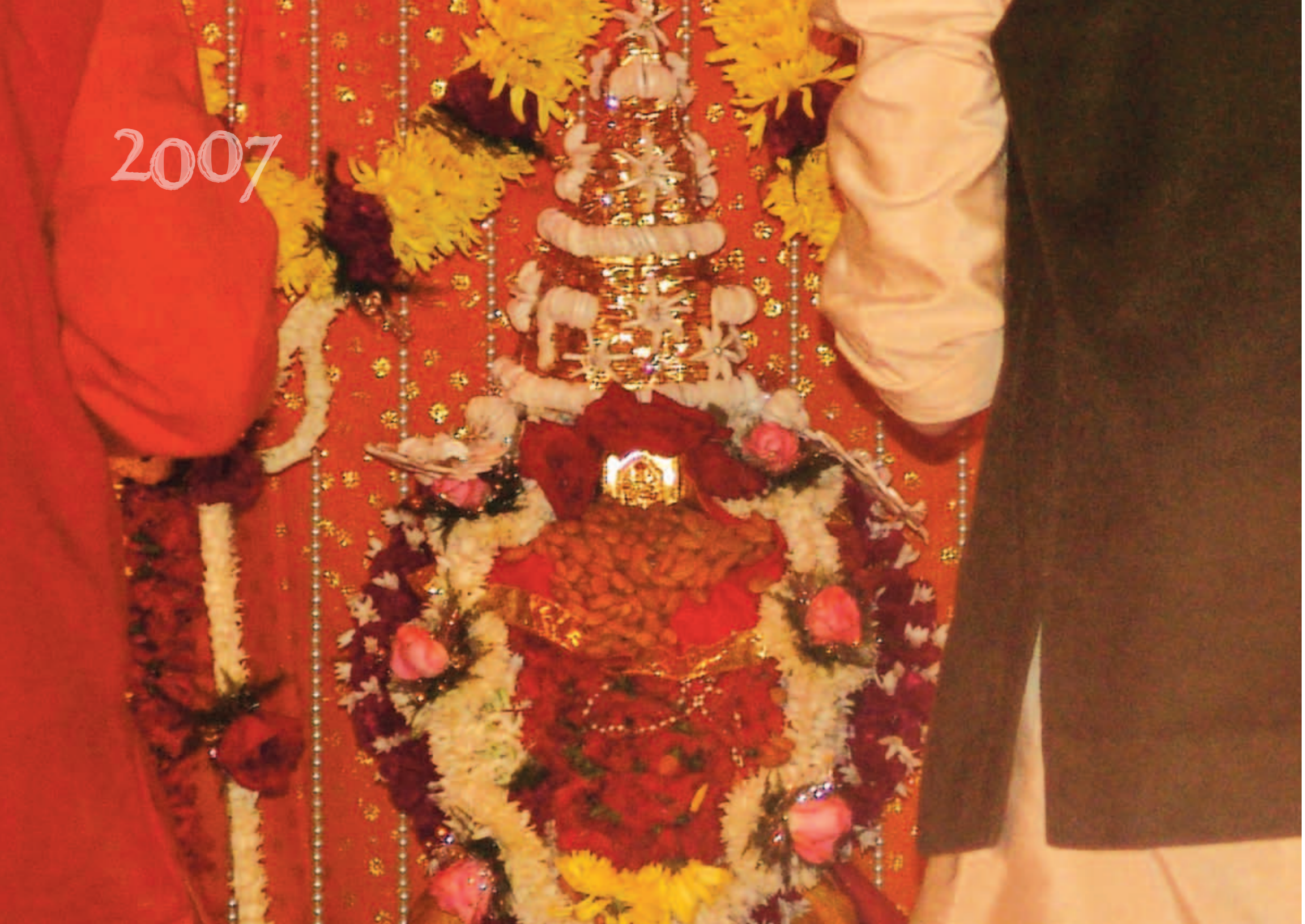








2007





Namo Narayan

With joy I welcome you to the culmination of this most sacred and auspicious Sat Chandi Mahayajna dedicated to the Mother Supreme. You have come from different religions, castes and creeds and from every corner of the world for just one reason, to be near the Cosmic Mother and receive her love and blessings.

I am the Universal Mother, the creator as well as creation. In different languages you call me by different names: Mother, Madre, Mata, Mai, yet the first word each and every one of you uttered was my name, Ma. You have gathered here in Rikhiapeeth to sing my glories, with “Ma” on your lips and in your hearts.

I am the embodiment of compassion and kindness with infinite love and forgiveness for all. I do not judge, I do not see weaknesses or differences; rather, I see only the purity of your

heart. I am the mother of all, pious and wicked, rich and poor, saints and sinners. My grace showers upon those who call to me with the innocence of children.

Love is the only transforming power, and I, the Cosmic Mother, am the fountain of divine love. Love sustains creation and leads to spiritual growth and progress. Love will transform your enemies into friends.

For the duration of this yajna let there be nothing but love in your hearts, let your thoughts be pure and sublime and become as simple as a child. Open your heart and receive my grace, which will relieve your sorrow and fill you with joy and peace.

This place abounds in divine and spiritual vibrations, so develop your spiritual awareness and open your heart by singing

kirtans and chanting mantras. What you are searching for is very close to you; with each and every breath remember this. Yajnas bestow peace, plenty, prosperity and above all they purify. This most sacred Rajasooya Yajna will purify hearts and minds.

I am present as the Cosmic Shakti. You should see me in everything, from the tiniest blade of grass to the tallest tree. Try to feel that I see through your eyes, hear through your ears and work through your hands. To feel my presence is a very precious thing and it is the ultimate truth of human life.

So, be ready, alert and aware, opportunities come only once, never a second time. I am very near. I am here. The blessings of the Mother are with you all.

Rendered through Atmasundari (New Zealand)





नमो नारायण।

देवी माँ को समर्पित इस परम पुनीत यज्ञ की पूर्णाहुति में मैं आप सब का हार्दिक स्वागत करती हूँ। अलग-अलग जाति, धर्म, संस्कृति और देशों से आप केवल एक उद्देश्य को लेकर आए हैं ऽ मुझ जगत्-जननी माँ के समीप आना और मेरा आशीर्वाद प्राप्त करना।

अलग-अलग भाषाओं में मुझे अनेक नामों से पुकारा जाता है ऽ माता, माई, मैया या मदर, लेकिन इस दुनिया में कदम रखते ही जिस ध्वनि को सबने पुकारा, वह मेरा ही नाम था ऽ माँ। यहाँ लिखियापीठ में आप इसी नाम का स्मरण करने एकत्र हुए हैं। मैं आनन्द, करुणा और प्रेम स्वरूपा हूँ। बिना किसी भेदभाव के सभी बच्चों पर मेरा अनुग्रह है। 'कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति।'

मैं सबकी माँ हूँ, चाहे वह अमीर हो या गरीब, पापी हो या संत, कपटी हो या साधु। जो भी बच्चे की तरह, सरल और सहज हृदय से

मुझे पुकारेगा वह मेरी कृपा का पात्र होगा। मैं उस अद्भुत दिव्य प्रेम की स्रोत हूँ, जिससे यह सम्पूर्ण सृष्टि कायम रहती है और उसकी आध्यात्मिक प्रगति होती है। प्रेम वह शक्ति है जिससे शत्रु भी मित्र बन जाते हैं।

अगले पाँच दिनों तक यज्ञ के हर कार्य में पूरी तरह सजग रहो, चाहे वह मन्त्र उच्चारण हो, कीर्तन या मेरी पूजा। अपने हृदय को दिव्य प्रेम से ओत-प्रोत करो और बच्चे की तरह सरल बन जाओ। तब तुम अवश्य मेरी कृपा के पात्र बनोगे।

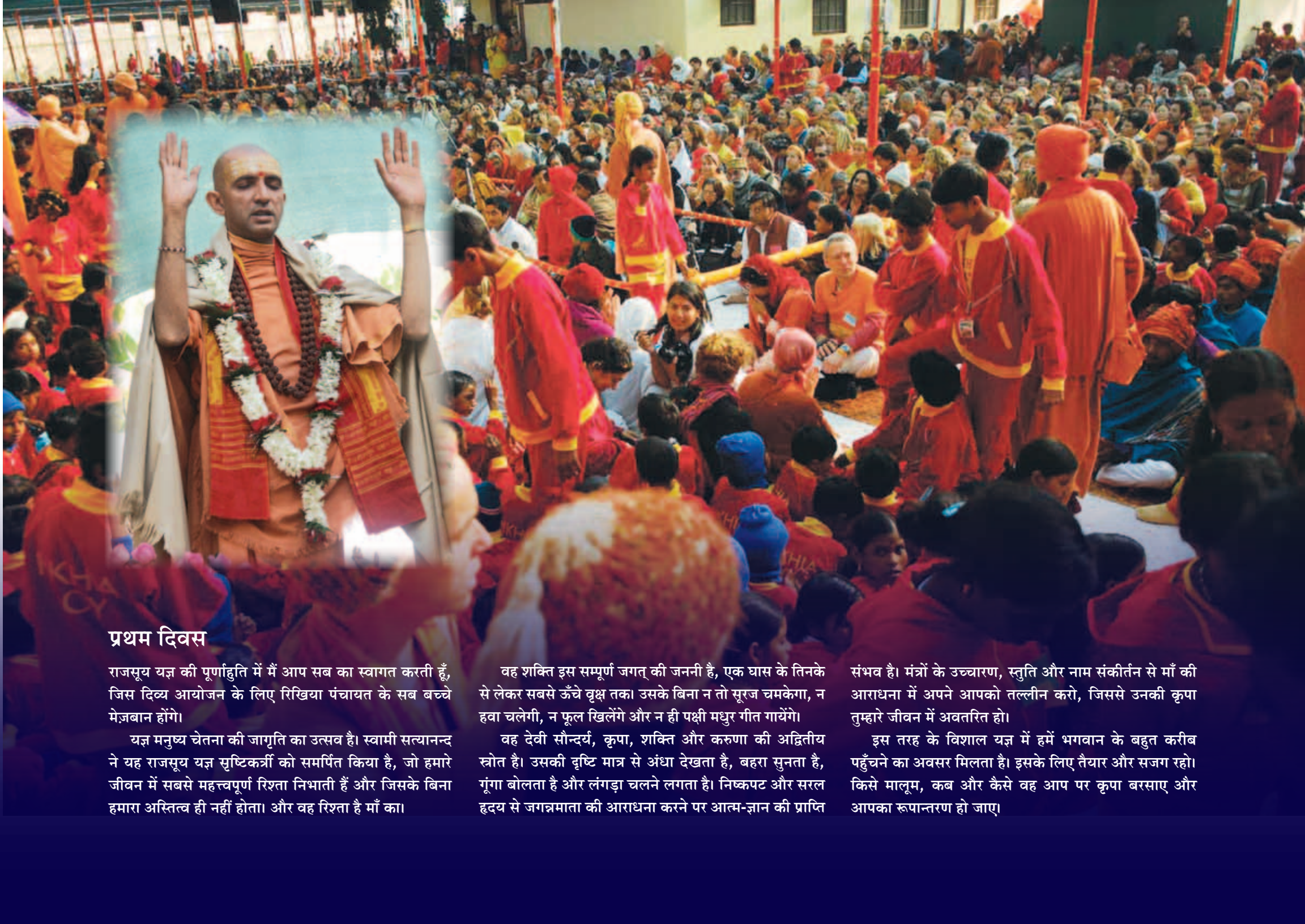
जिसे तुम ढूँढ रहे हो वह तुम्हारे अत्यन्त निकट है, इसे हमेशा याद रखो। जहाँ-जहाँ यज्ञ का आयोजन होता है, वह स्थान दिव्य आध्यात्मिक स्पंदनों से गुँजने लगता है। वहाँ सुख, शान्ति और समृद्धि फैलने लगती है। यह परम पुनीत राजसूय यज्ञ सब के जीवन को रूपान्तरित करेगा।

पराशक्ति के रूप में मैं स्रष्टा भी हूँ और सृष्टि भी। मैं तुम्हारे चारों ओर भी हूँ और भीतर भी। घास के तिनके से लेकर विशालकाय वृक्ष तक मेरी दिव्य उपस्थिति का अनुभव करो। ऐसा समझो मानो मैं ही तुम्हारी आँखों से देख रही हूँ, तुम्हारे कानों से सुन रही हूँ और तुम्हारे हाथों से काम कर रही हूँ। मेरी उपस्थिति की अनुभूति एक बहुत दुर्लभ उपलब्धि है और यही अनुभव मानव जीवन का अंतिम सत्य भी है।

इसलिए सतर्क और सावधान रहो। मौका सिर्फ एक बार आता है, इसलिए चूकना मत। मैं बहुत करीब हूँ, मैं यहीं हूँ। मेरा आशीर्वाद सबके साथ है।

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प्रथम दिवस

राजसूय यज्ञ की पूर्णाहुति में मैं आप सब का स्वागत करती हूँ, जिस दिव्य आयोजन के लिए रिखिया पंचायत के सब बच्चे मेज़बान होंगे।

यज्ञ मनुष्य चेतना की जागृति का उत्सव है। स्वामी सत्यानन्द ने यह राजसूय यज्ञ सृष्टिकर्त्री को समर्पित किया है, जो हमारे जीवन में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण रिश्ता निभाती हैं और जिसके बिना हमारा अस्तित्व ही नहीं होता। और वह रिश्ता है माँ का।

वह शक्ति इस सम्पूर्ण जगत् की जननी है, एक घास के तिनके से लेकर सबसे ऊँचे वृक्ष तक। उसके बिना न तो सूरज चमकेगा, न हवा चलेगी, न फूल खिलेंगे और न ही पक्षी मधुर गीत गावेंगे।

वह देवी सौन्दर्य, कृपा, शक्ति और करुणा की अद्वितीय स्रोत है। उसकी दृष्टि मात्र से अंधा देखता है, बहरा सुनता है, गूंगा बोलता है और लंगड़ा चलने लगता है। निष्कपट और सरल हृदय से जगन्माता की आराधना करने पर आत्म-ज्ञान की प्राप्ति

संभव है। मंत्रों के उच्चारण, स्तुति और नाम संकीर्तन से माँ की आराधना में अपने आपको तल्लीन करो, जिससे उनकी कृपा तुम्हारे जीवन में अवतरित हो।

इस तरह के विशाल यज्ञ में हमें भगवान के बहुत करीब पहुँचने का अवसर मिलता है। इसके लिए तैयार और सजग रहो। किसे मालूम, कब और कैसे वह आप पर कृपा बरसाए और आपका रूपान्तरण हो जाए।





Day One

I am very happy to welcome you all here for the twelfth and final year of the sacred Rajasooya Yajna at Rikhiapeeth for which we kanyas and batuks, the children of Rikhia Panchayat, are the hosts.

Yajna is a celebration of the awakening of man's consciousness and I am thankful to Swami Satyananda for dedicating this Raja-sooya Yajna to the most important person in our lives, the Mother. This yajna is being conducted to invoke the blessings and auspiciousness of Devi, the Cosmic Mother, and to ask her to nurture and protect us.

The Divine Mother is the creator of the cosmos and is present in all forms of visible and invisible creation. Her power exists within each and every one of us. Those who worship the cosmic Goddess will experience that she relieves all suffering. She is the bestower of health and prosperity who guides us all. She epitomizes beauty, strength, compassion and grace. A mere glance from her can make the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear and the dumb speak.

Worship of the Universal Mother leads to the attainment of self-knowledge. Approach her with an open heart, love, devotion and humility. Chant her mantras, sing her praise and repeat her name so that her love and grace may enter your life. The Mother will look after all your difficulties, physical, mental and spiritual.

When you are at a yajna of this magnitude, you are very close to God. Develop unshakeable faith in the Divine Mother and her grace will shower upon you.





Day Two

The grace of the Divine Mother showers on all who tread this spiritual path with sincerity and approach her with the innocence of children. She does not belong to any country, religion, caste, creed or gender. She is the mother of us all.

The Divine Mother has the power to bless everyone. She has infinite tolerance and is never cruel. She is the giver and nourisher of life, both physical and spiritual. Devi loves and cares for each and every one of us. She also looks after the growth of the trees and plants as well as everything else in creation. Devi is the creator, the preserver, as well as the destroyer. She is the creator as well as creation, and as the Chief Guest of this sacred yajna, she is presiding over this grand event and we, the kanyas, are her medium. Through us you can make direct contact with Devi. We are the Devi Kanyas of this yajna and are pure, simple and innocent. As hosts of this event the kanyas are the conductors of all the rituals and proceedings. We represent that pure soul that exists within everyone. Remember that we are not Devi, but we are her medium and through us you will receive her grace and blessings. To reconnect with the Divine Mother you too must once again become innocent and pure just as you were as a child, when you played in your mother's lap.

We kanyas and batuks express our love for Devi Ma by singing and dancing to the many kirtans that we have learnt. We can sing for hours and not get tired because we get so much energy when we sing for Devi Ma. Sri Swamiji has said that in the Kali Yuga singing the name is the quickest way to realize. Whenever you have the opportunity, join us to sing kirtans with open hearts. Make the most of this rare and precious opportunity. Do not waste a single moment. Remain immersed in the presence of Devi Ma, no matter what you are doing. When you eat, sleep and are seated here, think of her and chant her name. Remember the Mother always with love and devotion. Then she will surely come to your side and be with you.

द्वितीय दिवस

यह सत्य है कि जो भी सच्चे दिल से इस आध्यात्मिक पथ पर चलेगा और एक भोले-भाले बच्चे की तरह देवी माँ की आराधना करेगा, वह उनके अनुग्रह का पात्र बनेगा। देवी किसी एक देश, जाति, धर्म या सम्प्रदाय तक सीमित नहीं है, वह तो हम सबकी माँ है। अपने बच्चों के प्रति माता हमेशा उदार, दयालु और स्नेहयुक्त होती है। बच्चा पथ से भटक सकता है, पर क्या आपने माँ को कभी भटकते देखा है? कभी नहीं।

कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति।

इसलिए इस परिसर में आते ही अपनी सभी तकलीफों को भूल कर देवी माँ के प्रति समर्पित हो जाइये। वह आपके दुःखों को हर कर सुख, शान्ति और समृद्धि प्रदान करेंगी।

माँ सृष्टि की रचना, पालन और संहार, सभी कुछ करती है। वह सृष्टि भी है और स्रष्टा भी। इस पावन यज्ञ के मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में वह इस भव्य आयोजन की अध्यक्षता करेंगी और हम कन्याओं को उनका माध्यम बनने का सौभाग्य प्राप्त हुआ है।

हमारे माध्यम से आप देवी माँ के साथ सीधा सम्बन्ध स्थापित कर पायेंगे। हम इस यज्ञ की देव कन्यायें हैं। इस यज्ञ के मेजबान होने के नाते हम ही सभी कार्यक्रमों का संचालन करेंगी। याद रखिये, हम देवी नहीं हैं, लेकिन हम उनके माध्यम हैं और हमारे ही द्वारा आपको उनका अनुग्रह और आशीर्वाद प्राप्त होगा। देवी माँ से पुनः अपना सम्बन्ध जोड़ने के लिए आपको वैसा ही निष्कपट और सरल बनना होगा जैसे आप अपने बचपन में थे। हम कन्या-बटुक कीर्तन गा कर और नाच कर देवी माँ के प्रति अपना प्रेम समर्पित करते हैं। हम बिना थके, घण्टों तक कीर्तन गा सकते हैं, क्योंकि माँ के लिए गाते समय हमें अद्भुत ऊर्जा और शक्ति प्राप्त होती है।

श्री स्वामीजी ने कहा है कि कलियुग में नाम संकीर्तन ही भगवान को पाने का सबसे सरल एवं सुगम रास्ता है। इसलिए खुले दिल के साथ हमारे संग कीर्तन में भाग लीजिए। इस दुर्लभ अवसर को हाथ से मत जाने दीजिए। एक क्षण भी व्यर्थ न गंवाइये। हमेशा देवी माँ की याद में तल्लीन रहिए। खाते, पीते, सोते, जागते ऽ हमेशा उनका स्मरण और गुणगान करते जाइये। तब वे अवश्य आपके पास आयेंगी।











Day 3

In Dwapara Yuga the Pandavas held the Rajasooya Yajna in the presence of Lord Krishna at Indraprastha, which is now modern day Delhi. In Kali Yuga Swami Satyananda is performing the Rajasooya Yajna at Rikhiapeth to adore and worship the Cosmic Mother.

The Rajasooya Yajna is performed only by kings and emperors. You must understand that a king is not only a person who conquers land. A person who conquers the world with an idea can also be called a king. A person who has conquered many hearts can be called 'The King of Hearts'.

Our beloved Swami Satyananda has spread the teachings of yoga from 'shore to shore and door to door'. He has presented yoga to the world in a most useful and beneficial way for society and mankind. The seed of yoga planted by Swami Satyananda has today blossomed throughout the world in millions of homes and hearts. The light of jnana has been kindled in many lives throughout the world without any distinction of race, religion, country, class or gender. This yajna is a tribute to that.

You will experience the benefits of this yajna by generating the feelings of shraddha, faith, and bhakti, devotion, and by tuning into the divine vibrations which pervade the environment.

So when you enter here, forget all your daily worries and surrender your heart and mind to her, and allow the grace of Devi Ma to pervade your lives. She will remove your sorrow and give you health, wealth and happiness.

This Sat Chandi Mahayajna is a sacred and divine opportunity to receive the grace and blessings of Devi. May the Divine Mother bless us all.



तृतीय दिवस

द्वापर में पाण्डवों ने, श्रीकृष्ण की उपस्थिति में, इंद्रप्रस्थ यानि आधुनिक दिल्ली में राजसूय यज्ञ किया था।

कलियुग में स्वामी सत्यानन्द रिखियापीठ में राजसूय यज्ञ के द्वारा देवी माँ की आराधना और उपासना कर रहे हैं।

ऐसा हमेशा कहा गया है कि राजसूय यज्ञ केवल राजा-महाराजा आयोजित करते हैं। परन्तु यह विचारणीय है कि क्या केवल धरती जीतने वाला ही राजा कहलाता है? जो अपने विचारों से दुनिया को जीतता है, वह भी तो राजा कहलाया जा सकता है।

योग का जो बीज स्वामी सत्यानन्द द्वारा रोपा गया था, वह आज करोड़ों दिलों में पल्लवित हुआ है। बिना भेद-भाव के दुनिया के हर कोने में ज्ञान की ज्योति प्रज्वलित हुई है। यह यज्ञ उसी के प्रति श्रद्धांजलि है।

योग और यज्ञ का जो बीज स्वामी सत्यानन्द द्वारा रोपा गया है, वह इस संसार के लिए एक वरदान है। आने वाले समय में मानवता सुख और शान्ति के लिए इन्हीं दो विधियों का सहारा लेगी।

यज्ञ के दौरान मंत्रों के पाठ में स्वयं को तल्लीन कर अपने भीतर श्रद्धा, विश्वास और भक्ति को जगाइये। अपने दुःखों और तकलीफों को भूलकर, अपने आपको देवी माँ के प्रति समर्पित कीजिए। दैवी अनुग्रह पाने का यही तरीका है।

यह शतचण्डी महायज्ञ देवी माँ का आशीर्वाद प्राप्त करने का एक दिव्य और दुर्लभ अवसर है।

देवी माँ की कृपा हम सबको प्राप्त हो।









Day 4

Tomorrow is the final day of the Sat Chandi Mahayajna, which will culminate in worship of the kanyas. During the Kanya Pooja, the eligible kanyas are worshipped as the true representatives of the Divine Mother. They will be adorned in beautiful garments, decorated with nice ornaments, served a splendid meal and presented with Devi prasad. You will witness the grandeur and glory of the Cosmic Mother in the kanyas.

By feeding and clothing kanyas, the Divine Mother is fed. By adorning kanyas with ornaments, Devi herself is adorned. This is the way to attain peace, plenty and prosperity.

Tomorrow, on the fifth and last day of the Rajasooya Yajna, we will also commemorate Sita Kalyanam. This very special day is called Vivah Panchami. It was on this day, at the end of Treta Yuga, in the month of Marga Sheersha, almost two million years ago, that the divine union of the Cosmic Mother with the Cosmic Father, Sita and Rama, took place. This sacred marriage represents the union of the individual soul with the Supreme Being. It is the celebration of the union of Shakti, cosmic energy, with Shiva, cosmic consciousness, which created all the worlds.

During the past days, Devi has been invoked and worshipped by the chanting of powerful mantas. A charged energy field has been created in which it is possible to catch a glimpse of the divine power. She comes in many forms and can be visible only to those who are mindful and alert. The mantras you have been chanting tune your mind, feelings and emotions to capture the essence of the cosmic energy that has been invoked.

The Cosmic Mother is here, above you, below you, around you and within you. Expand the antenna of your mind, open your heart and feel her presence.





चतुर्थ दिवस

कल यह शतचण्डी महायज्ञ अपनी पराकाष्ठा पर पहुँचेगा, जिसमें देवी माँ के सबसे सुन्दर कन्या रूप की आराधना होगी।

कन्या पूजा में कन्यायें देवी की साक्षात् प्रतिनिधि होती हैं। इन कन्याओं में देवी माँ की कीर्ति और वैभव प्रत्यक्ष होगा। और याद रहे कि इनको सुन्दर वस्त्र एवं आभूषणों में सजा कर, अच्छे व्यंजन और उपहार प्रदान कर आप देवी माँ की ही सेवा और सम्मान कर रहे हो।

ऐसा सोचो कि उनको खुश करके आप माँ को ही खुश कर रहे हो। सुख, शान्ति और समृद्धि प्राप्त करने का सरल मार्ग

यही है कि उनकी सेवा करते हुए यही सोचो कि आप देवी माँ की ही आराधना और अर्चना कर रहे हो। अगर यह विचार आपके हृदय में बस जाए, तो यह समझो कि आपका यहाँ आना सफल हुआ।

कल विवाह पंचमी का शुभ अवसर है। त्रेता युग के अंत में, जब देवी माँ ने सीता रूप में अवतार लिया, तब इसी दिन उनका जगत् पिता श्री राम के साथ विवाह हुआ, जो सदियों से जीवात्मा और परमात्मा के मिलन का प्रतीक रहा है। यह विवाह शिव और शक्ति का योग है। इनका मिलन संसार के सृजन का कारण

है। इसी पावन दिवस को सीता कल्याणम् के रूप में मनाया जाएगा।

पिछले तीन दिनों से देवी माँ का शक्तिशाली मंत्रों के माध्यम से आवाहन किया जा रहा है। यहाँ एक ऐसे दिव्य ऊर्जा क्षेत्र का निर्माण किया गया है जिसमें देवी माँ की झलक पाना संभव है। माँ अनेक रूपों में आती है और उन्हें वही देख सकता है जो सजग और सतर्क है। माँ आपके चारों ओर है, अपने हृदय को संवेदनशील बनाकर उनका अनुभव करने का प्रयास कीजिए।























Namo Narayana

The first quantum leap our forefathers took was the discovery of fire, which brought us to our present level of evolution. However, at any moment nature can reduce us to ashes, leaving no trace of our existence. The ancient rishis and munis of India were aware of the perils of technology and advocated yoga and yajna as the means to save mankind from extinction. Yajna will prove to be a boon for future generations as it will offer the possibility of combating the disasters the world will face.

Performing yajna is an act of universal love and compassion. It is an act of love because it expresses our remembrance of the source of life and our gratitude for the chance to live. It is an act of repaying a debt to nature for feeding and nurturing us on this beautiful earth. It is also unspoken thanks for all that we have received. True compassion is giving back what we have received. This heightened remembrance in return re-nourishes us and gives us the ability to achieve our goals with ease and splendour. Thus our relationship with existence grows deeper and deeper.

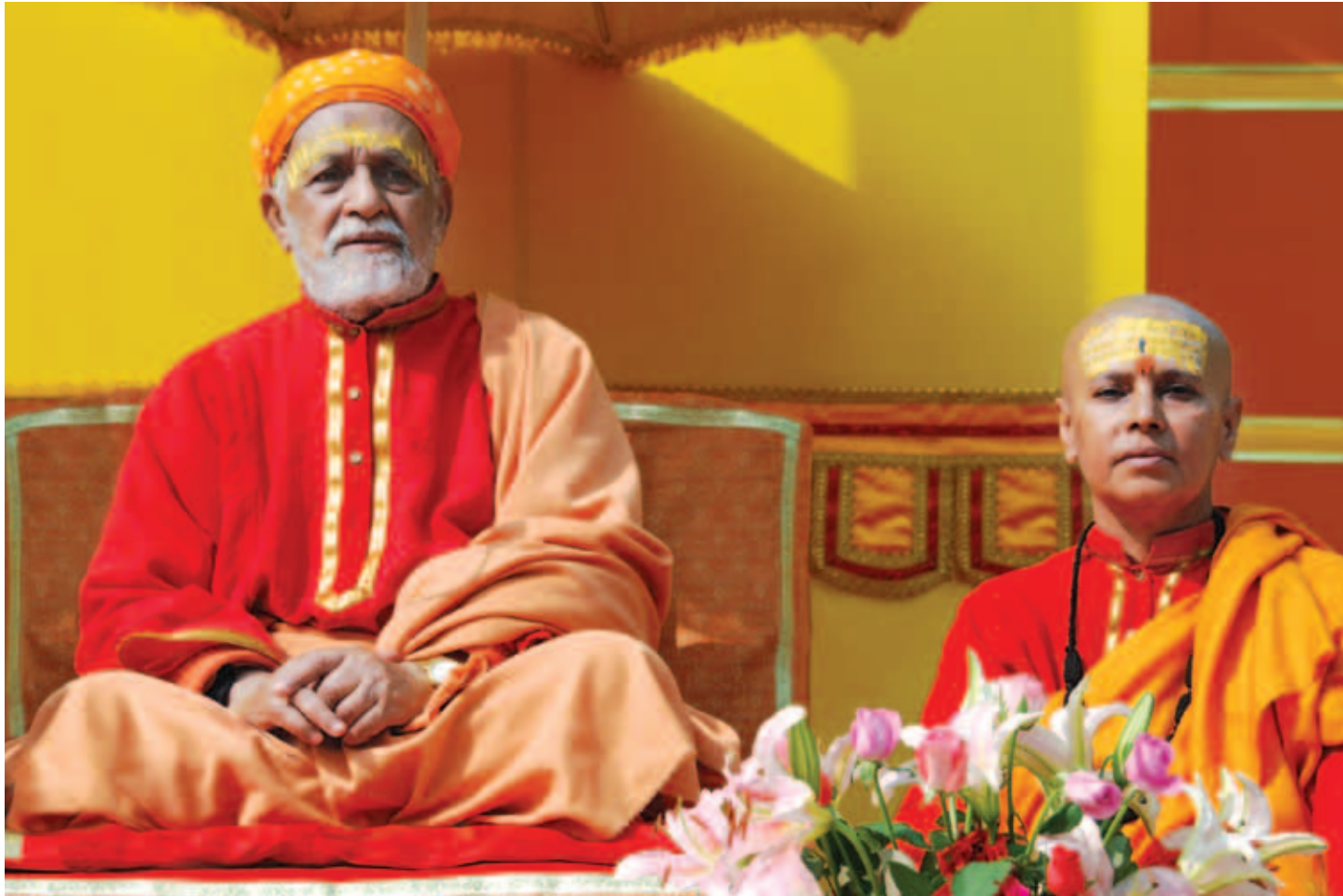
For this reason Swami Satyananda has brought the ancient ritual of yajna into the limelight. Just as in 1968 he began to systematically present the hitherto unknown practices of yoga for the evolution of man from gross to higher mental levels, from 1988 onwards he began to present the esoteric practice of yajna in the same scientific and systematic way, so that mankind could have an efficient tool or medium to ensure the safety of its existence on this planet.

At first Swami Satyananda conducted the most difficult Panchagni Yajna, which can only be performed by one for whom nature is benevolent. He then announced the Rajasooya Yajna, including Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam. Now his grand twelve year sankalpa through yajna has been fulfilled. More than 250 villages from 19 panchayats and 30,000 families received the sacred yajna prasad, which has brought prosperity and happiness into their homes.

Swami Satyananda offered it all to us on a golden platter. Everyone received the grace of guru and Devi which flowed in abundance at the culmination of this once in a lifetime event. The doors of Devi's divine grace are wide open at Rikhiapeth. Throughout the Rajasooya Yajna, her vibrating presence was felt by all, and her blessings will continue to be showered upon us for years to come. Truly Swami Satyananda is the emperor whose empire has no boundaries, the conqueror of our hearts.







The Mandate

I received three instructions from my Guru, Swami Sivananda: serve, love and give. These percepts became the sadhana to be perfected in my life, and took a definite form when I came to Rikhia. To help others grow and become better in all respects. external and internal, social and personal is my Sankalpa (resolve). Whatever methods I have adopted over the years, whether yoga or the activities in Rikhia, were only a means to fulfil this sankalpa. All of you must learn to live for others apart from making individual resolutions.

The Rikhia ashram will now be known as Rikhiapeeth. Peeth means 'seat', an apt term for Rikhia as the instructions given by Swami Sivananda have culminated and fructified here. Rikhia is an ashram in the original sense of the word because here a lifestyle is lived. Swami Satyasangananda is the first Peethadhishwari or Acharya (master teacher) of Rikhiapeeth and has been given the sankalpa that three cardinal teachings of Swami Sivananda will be practised and lived here. This is the future vision of Rikhia.



Look yonder!
Destiny awaits...





Blessings
for
peace,
plenty
and
prosperity

Swami Satyanand



Synopsis of the Life of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Swami Satyananda Saraswati was born in 1923 at Almora (Uttarakhand) into a family of farmers. His ancestors were warriors and many of his kith and kin down the line, including his father, served in the army and police force. However, it became evident that Sri Swamiji had a different bent of mind, as he began to have spiritual experiences at the age of six, when his awareness spontaneously left the body and he saw himself lying motionless on the floor. Many saints and sadhus blessed him and reassured his parents that he had a very developed awareness. This experience of disembodied awareness continued, which led him to many saints of that time such as Anandamayi Ma. Sri Swamiji also met a tantric bhairavi, Sukhman Giri, who gave him shaktipat and directed him to find a guru in order to stabilize his spiritual experiences.

In 1943, at the age of 20, he renounced his home and went in search of a guru. This search ultimately led him to Swami Sivananda Saraswati at Rishikesh, who initiated him into the Dashnam Order of Sannyasa on 12th September 1947 on the banks of the Ganges and gave him the name Swami Satyananda Saraswati.

In those early years at Rishikesh, Sri Swamiji immersed himself in guru seva. At that time the ashram was still in its infancy and even basic amenities such as buildings and toilets were absent. The forests surrounding the small ashram were infested with snakes, scorpions, mosquitoes, monkeys and even tigers. The ashram work too was heavy and hard, requiring Sri Swamiji to toil like a labourer carrying bucket loads of water from the Ganga up to the ashram and digging canals from the high mountain streams down to the ashram many kilometres away in order to store water for constructing the ashram.

Rishikesh was then a small town and all the ashram requirements had to be brought by foot from far away. In addition there were varied duties, including the daily pooja at Vishwanath Mandir, for which Sri Swamiji would go into the dense forests to collect bael leaves. If anyone fell sick there was no medical care and no one to attend to them. All the sannyasins had to go out for bhiksha or alms as the ashram did not have a mess or kitchen.

Of that glorious time when he lived and served his guru, Sri Swamiji says that it was a period of total communion and surrender to the guru tattwa, whereby he felt that just to hear, speak or see Swami Sivananda was yoga. But most of all his guru's words rang true,

for through this dedication and spirit of nishkama seva he gained an enlightened understanding of the secrets of spiritual life and became an authority on Yoga, Tantra, Vedanta, Samkhya and kundalini yoga. Although he had a photographic memory and a keen intellect, and his guru described him as a versatile genius, Swami Satyananda's learning did not come from books and study in the ashram. His knowledge unfolded from within through his untiring seva as well as his abiding faith and love for Swami Sivananda.

In 1956, after spending twelve years in guru seva, Swami Satyananda set out as a wanderer (parivrajaka). Before his departure Swami Sivananda taught him kriya yoga and gave him the mission to "spread yoga from door to door and shore to shore".

As a wandering sannyasin, Swami Satyananda travelled extensively by foot, car, train and sometimes even by camel throughout India, Afghanistan, Burma, Nepal, Tibet, Ceylon and the entire Asian subcontinent. During his sojourns, he met people from all stratas of society and began formulating his ideas on how to spread the yogic techniques. Although his formal education and spiritual tradition was that of Vedanta, the task of disseminating yoga became his movement.

His mission unfolded before him in 1956 when he founded the International Yoga Fellowship Movement with the aim of creating a global fraternity of yoga. Because his mission was revealed to him at Munger, Bihar, he established the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger. Before long his teachings were rapidly spreading throughout the world. From 1963 to 1983, Swami Satyananda took yoga to each and every corner of the world, to people of every caste, creed, religion and nationality. He guided millions of seekers in all continents and established centres and ashrams in different countries.

His frequent travels took him to Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, USA, England, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Sudan, Egypt, Nairobi, Ghana, Mauritius, Alaska and Iceland. One can easily say that Sri Swamiji hoisted the flag of yoga in every nook and cranny of the world.

Nowhere did he face opposition, resistance or criticism. His way was unique. Well-versed in all religions and scriptures, he incorporated their wisdom with such a natural flair that people of all faiths were drawn to him. His teaching was not just confined to yoga but covered the wisdom of many millenniums.

Sri Swamiji brought to light the knowledge of Tantra, the mother of all philosophies, the sublime truths of Vedanta, the Upanishads and Puranas, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam and Christianity, including modern scientific analysis of matter and creation. He interpreted, explained and gave precise, accurate and systematic explanations of the ancient systems of Tantra and Yoga, revealing practices hitherto unknown.

It can be said that Sri Swamiji was a pioneer in the field of yoga because his presentation had a novelty and freshness. Ajapa japa, antar mouna, pawanmuktasana, kriya yoga and prana vidya are just some of the practices which he introduced in such a methodical and simple manner that it became possible for everyone to delve into this valuable and hitherto inaccessible science for their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development.

Yoga nidra was Sri Swamiji's interpretation of the tantric system of nyasa. With his deep insight into this knowledge, he was able to realize the potential of this practice of nyasa in a manner which gave it a practical utility for each and every individual, rather than just remaining a prerequisite for worship. Yoga nidra is but one example of his acumen and penetrating insight into the ancient systems.

Sri Swamiji's outlook was inspiring, uplifting as well as in-depth and penetrating. Yet his language and explanations were always simple and easy to comprehend. During this period he authored over eighty books on yoga and tantra which, due to their authenticity, are accepted as textbooks in schools and universities throughout the world. These books have been translated into Italian, German, Spanish, Russian, Yugoslavian, Chinese, French, Greek, Iranian and most other prominent languages of the world.

People took to his ideas and spiritual seekers of all faiths and nationalities flocked to him. He initiated thousands into mantra and sannyasa, sowing in them the seed to live the divine life. He exhibited tremendous zeal and energy in spreading the light of yoga, and in the short span of twenty years Sri Swamiji fulfilled the mandate of his guru.

Institutions created by Swami Satyananda Saraswati

By 1983, Bihar School of Yoga was well established and recognized throughout the world as a reputed and authentic centre for learning yoga and the spiritual sciences. More than that, yoga had moved out of the caves of hermits and ascetics into the mainstream of society. Whether in hospitals, jails, schools, colleges, business houses, the sporting and fashion arenas, the army or navy, yoga was in demand. Professionals such as lawyers, engineers, doctors, business magnates and professors were incorporating yoga into their lives. So too were the masses. Yoga had become a household word.

Now, at the peak of his accomplishment, having fulfilled his guru's wish, Swami Satyananda renounced all that he created and appointed his successor, Swami Niranjanananda, to continue the work.

In 1988 Sri Swamiji renounced disciples, establishments and institutions, and departed from Munger, never to return again, on a pilgrimage through the siddha teerthas of India, as a mendicant, without any personal belongings or assistance from the ashrams or institutions he had founded.

At Trayambakeshwar, the jyotirlinga of Lord Mrityunjaya, his ishta devata, he renounced his garb and lived as an avadhoota, during which time his future place of abode and sadhana were revealed to him.

According to the mandate of his ishta devata, which was revealed to him at the source of the Godavari river near Neel Parbat at Trayambakeshwar (Maharashtra), Swami Satyananda came to the cremation ground of Sati in 1989, and took up residence in Rikhia, on the outskirts of Baba Baidyanath Dham in Deoghar (Jharkhand).

Swami Satyananda has been residing at Rikhia since September 1989. During this period he has undertaken long and arduous sadhanas such as Panchagni and Ashtottar-shat-laksh (108 lakh) mantra purascharana. Here he entered the lifestyle of the Paramahamsas who do not work for their flock and mission alone but have a universal vision. He does not associate with any institutions, nor does he give diksha, upadesha or receive dakshina, but remains in seclusion and sadhana, only on rare occasions coming out to give darshan to devotees who are always yearning for a glimpse of him.



International Yoga Fellowship Movement (IYFM), 1956.



Bihar School of Yoga (BSY), 1963.



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श्री-महिषासुरमर्दिनी-स्तोत्रम्

अथि गिरिनन्दिनि नन्दितमेदिनि विश्वविनोदिनि नन्दिनुते
गिरिवरविन्ध्यशिरोऽधिनिवासिनि विष्णुविलासिनि जिष्णुनुते।
भगवति हे शितिकण्ठकुटुम्बिनि भूरिकुटुम्बिनि भूतिकृते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥1॥

सुरवरवर्षिणि दुर्धरधर्षिणि दुर्मुखमर्षिणि हर्षरते
त्रिभुवनपोषिणि शंकरतोषिणि किल्बिषमोषिणि घोषरते।
दनुजनिरोषिणि दितिसुतरोषिणि दुर्मदशोषिणि सिन्धुसुते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥2॥

अथि जगदम्बमदम्ब कदम्बवनप्रियवासिनि हासरते
शिखरिशिरोमणितुंगाहिमालयशृंगनिजालय मध्यगते।
मधुमधुरे मधुकैटभगंजिनि कैटभभंजिनि रासरते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥3॥

अथि शतखण्ड विखण्डितरुण्ड वितुण्डितशुण्ड गजाधिपते
रिपुगजगण्ड विदारणचण्ड पराक्रमशौण्ड मृगाधिपते।
निजभुजदण्ड निपातितचण्डविपातितमुण्डभटाधिपते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥4॥

अथिरणदुर्मद शत्रुवधोदित दुर्धरनिर्जर शक्तिभृते
चतुरविचारधुरीणमहाशिव दूतकृत् प्रमथाधिपते।
दुरितदुरीह दुराशयदुर्मति दानवदूतकृतान्तमते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥5॥

अथि शरणागतवैरिवधुवर वीरवराभयदायकरे
त्रिभुवन मस्तक शूलविरोधि शिरोऽधिकृतामल शूलकरे।
दुमिदुमितामर दुन्दुभिनाद मुहुर्मुखीकृत दिङ्निकरे
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥6॥

अथि निजहुंकृतिमात्र निराकृत धूम्रविलोचन धूम्रशते
समरविशोषित शोणितबीज समुद्भवशोणित बीजलते।
शिव शिव शुम्भनिशुम्भमहाहव तर्पित भूत पिशाचरते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥7॥

धनुरनुषंग रणक्षणसंग परिस्फुरदंग नटत्कटके
कनक पिशंगपृषत्कनिषंगरसद्भटशृंग हतावटुके।
कृतचतुरंग बलक्षितिरंग घटदबहुंग रटदवटुके
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥8॥

जय जय जय्यजये जय शब्दपरस्तुति तत्पर विश्वनुते
झणझणझिञ्झिमि झिंकृतनूपुर शिञ्जितमोहित भूतपते।
नटितनटार्ध नटीनटनायक नाटितनाट्य सुगानरते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥9॥

अथि सुमनः सुमनः सुमनः सुमनोहर कान्तियुते
श्रितरजनी रजनी रजनी रजनी रजनीकर वक्त्रवृते।
सुनयनविभ्रमरभ्रमरभ्रमरभ्रमरभ्रमराधिपते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥10॥

महितमहाहव वल्लभतल्लिक वल्लितरल्लित भल्लिरते
विरचितवल्लिक पल्लिकमल्लिक झिल्लिकभिल्लिक वर्गवृते।
श्रुतकृतफुल्ल समुल्लसितारुणतल्लजपल्लव सल्ललिते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥11॥

अविरलगण्डगलन्मदमेदुर मत्तमर्तगज राजपते
त्रिभुवनभूषणभूतकलानिधि रूपपयोनिधि राजसुते।
अथि सुदतीजन लालसमानस मोहनमन्मथ राजसुते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥12॥

कमलदलामल कोमलकान्ति कलाकलितामल भाललते।
सकलविलास कलानिलयक्रम केलिचलत्कल हंसकुले।
अलिकुलसंकुल कुवलय मण्डल मौलिमिलद्वकुलालिकुले
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥13॥

करमुरलीरववीजितकूजित लज्जितकोकिल मंजुमते
मिलितपुलिन्द मनोहरगुञ्जित रंजितशैल निक्कुजगते।
निजगणभूत महाशबरीगण रंगणसम्भूत केलिरते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥14॥

कटितटपीत दुकूलविचित्र मयूखतिरस्कृत चण्डरुचे
प्रणतसुरासुर मौलिमणिस्फुरदंशुलसन्नख चन्द्ररुचे ।

जितकनकाचल मौलिमदोर्जित निर्भरकुञ्जर कुम्भकुचे
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥15॥

विजित सहस्रकरैक सहस्रकरैक सहस्रकरैकनुते
कृतसुरतारक संगरतारक संगरतारक सूनसुते।
सुरथसमाधि समानसमाधि समाधिसमाधि सुजातरते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥16॥

पदकमलं करुणानिलये वरिवस्यति योऽनुदिनं सु शिवे
अथि कमले कमलानिलये कमलानिलयः स कथं न भवेत्।
तव पदमेव परंपदमित्यनुशीलयतो मम किं न शिवे
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥17॥

कनकलसत्कल शीकजलैरनुषिञ्चति तेऽङ्गणरङ्गभुवम्
भजति स किं न शचीकुचकुंभ नटीपरिरम्भ सुखानुभवम्।
तवचरणं शरणं करवाणि मृडानि सदा मयि देहि शिवं
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥18॥

तव विमलेन्दुकलं वदनेन्दुमलं सकलं ननु कूलयते
किमु पुरुहूतपुरीन्दुमुखी सुमुखीभिरसौ विमुखीक्रियते।
मम तु मतं शिवनामधने भवती कृपया किमु न क्रियते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥19॥

अथि मयि दीनदयालुतया कृपयैव त्वया भवितव्यमुमे
अथि जगतो जननि कृपयासि यथासि तथाऽनुमितासिरते।
यदुचितमत्र भवत्युरी कुरुतादुरुतापमपाकुरुते
जय जय हे महिषासुरमर्दिनि रम्यकर्पादिनि शैलसुते ॥20॥

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